

20N
1
23
31761119700755
4

20N

1

23



Government
Publications

Nº 44

ISSN 1180-2987

Legislative Assembly
of Ontario

Second Session, 41st Parliament

Assemblée législative
de l'Ontario

Deuxième session, 41^e législature

Official Report of Debates (Hansard)

Journal des débats (Hansard)

Wednesday 22 February 2017

Mercredi 22 février 2017



Speaker
Honourable Dave Levac

Président
L'honorable Dave Levac

Clerk
Todd Decker

Greffier
Todd Decker

Hansard on the Internet

Hansard and other documents of the Legislative Assembly can be on your personal computer within hours after each sitting. The address is:

<http://www.ontla.on.ca/>

Index inquiries

Reference to a cumulative index of previous issues may be obtained by calling the Hansard Reporting Service indexing staff at 416-325-7410 or 325-3708.

Le Journal des débats sur Internet

L'adresse pour faire paraître sur votre ordinateur personnel le Journal et d'autres documents de l'Assemblée législative en quelques heures seulement après la séance est :

Renseignements sur l'index

Adressez vos questions portant sur des numéros précédents du Journal des débats au personnel de l'index, qui vous fourniront des références aux pages dans l'index cumulatif, en composant le 416-325-7410 ou le 325-3708.

Hansard Reporting and Interpretation Services
Room 500, West Wing, Legislative Building
111 Wellesley Street West, Queen's Park
Toronto ON M7A 1A2
Telephone 416-325-7400; fax 416-325-7430
Published by the Legislative Assembly of Ontario



Service du Journal des débats et d'interprétation
Salle 500, aile ouest, Édifice du Parlement
111, rue Wellesley ouest, Queen's Park
Toronto ON M7A 1A2
Téléphone, 416-325-7400; télécopieur, 416-325-7430
Publié par l'Assemblée législative de l'Ontario

CONTENTS / TABLE DES MATIÈRES

Wednesday 22 February 2017 / Mercredi 22 février 2017

Protecting Vulnerable Energy Consumers Act, 2017, Bill 95, Mr. Thibeault / Loi de 2017 protégeant les consommateurs d'énergie vulnérables, projet de loi 95, M. Thibeault

First reading agreed to.....	2321
Hon. Glenn Thibeault.....	2321

Protecting Vulnerable Energy Consumers Act, 2017, Bill 95, Mr. Thibeault / Loi de 2017 protégeant les consommateurs d'énergie vulnérables, projet de loi 95, M. Thibeault

Second reading agreed to	2321
--------------------------------	------

Protecting Vulnerable Energy Consumers Act, 2017, Bill 95, Mr. Thibeault / Loi de 2017 protégeant les consommateurs d'énergie vulnérables, projet de loi 95, M. Thibeault

Third reading agreed to	2322
-------------------------------	------

ORDERS OF THE DAY / ORDRE DU JOUR

Supporting Children, Youth and Families Act, 2017, Bill 89, Mr. Coteau / Loi de 2017 sur le soutien à l'enfance, à la jeunesse et à la famille, projet de loi 89, M. Coteau

Hon. Michael Coteau	2322
Ms. Sophie Kiwala.....	2326
Mrs. Gila Martow.....	2330
Miss Monique Taylor.....	2330
Hon. Mitzie Hunter	2330
Ms. Sylvia Jones	2331
Ms. Sophie Kiwala.....	2331
Second reading debate deemed adjourned	2331

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS / PRÉSENTATION DES VISITEURS

Mr. Rick Nicholls.....	2331
Mr. Han Dong	2331
Mr. John Yakabuski	2331
Mr. James J. Bradley	2331
Mr. Victor Fedeli.....	2331
Hon. Tracy MacCharles	2331
Mrs. Gila Martow.....	2332
Hon. Marie-France Lalonde	2332
Mr. Steve Clark	2332
Ms. Andrea Horwath.....	2332
Mr. Ted McMeekin	2332
Mr. Robert Bailey	2332
Ms. Daiene Vernile	2332

Ms. Sylvia Jones.....	2332
Ms. Jennifer K. French.....	2332
Ms. Ann Hoggarth.....	2332
Ms. Lisa MacLeod.....	2332
Mr. Percy Hatfield.....	2332
Hon. Glenn Thibeault.....	2332
Mr. Jack McLaren	2332
M. Michael Mantha.....	2332
Ms. Soo Wong.....	2332
Ms. Sylvia Jones.....	2332
Miss Monique Taylor	2332
Hon. Michael Coteau.....	2332
Mr. Raymond Sung Joon Cho	2332
Mr. Han Dong	2332
Mr. Norm Miller.....	2332
Ms. Jennifer K. French.....	2332
Mr. Victor Fedeli.....	2332
The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac)	2332

Bob White

Mr. Taras Natyshak	2333
--------------------------	------

Legislative pages

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac)	2333
-------------------------------------	------

ORAL QUESTIONS / QUESTIONS ORALES

Executive compensation

Mr. Patrick Brown.....	2333
Hon. Liz Sandals	2333

Executive compensation

Mr. Patrick Brown.....	2334
Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne	2334

Energy policies

Ms. Andrea Horwath.....	2335
Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne	2335

Hydro rates

Ms. Andrea Horwath.....	2335
Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne	2335

Government spending

Mr. Steve Clark	2336
Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne	2336
Hon. Charles Sousa	2337

Hydro rates

Ms. Jennifer K. French.....	2337
Hon. Glenn Thibeault.....	2337

Anti-racism activities

M. Shafiq Qaadri.....	2337
Hon. Michael Coteau.....	2338

Energy policies	
Mr. Todd Smith	2338
Hon. Glenn Thibeault	2338
Labour dispute	
Miss Monique Taylor	2339
Hon. Michael Coteau	2339
Human trafficking	
Mr. Granville Anderson	2339
Hon. Indira Naidoo-Harris	2339
Hon. Yasir Naqvi	2340
Child protection	
Mr. Norm Miller	2340
Hon. Michael Coteau	2340
Mr. Victor Fedeli	2340
Energy policies	
Ms. Andrea Horwath	2341
Hon. Glenn Thibeault	2341
Water extraction	
Mr. John Fraser	2341
Hon. Glen R. Murray	2341
Hydro rates	
Mr. Sam Oosterhoff	2342
Hon. Brad Duguid	2342
Ms. Sylvia Jones	2342
Hon. Glenn Thibeault	2342
Health care funding	
Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong	2342
Hon. Eric Hoskins	2342
Anti-bullying initiatives	
Ms. Ann Hoggarth	2343
Hon. Mitzie Hunter	2343
Notice of dissatisfaction	
The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac)	2343

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS / PRÉSENTATION DES VISITEURS

Mr. James J. Bradley	2343
Hon. Helena Jaczek	2344
Hon. Indira Naidoo-Harris	2344
Ms. Peggy Sattler	2344
The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac)	2344

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS / DÉCLARATIONS DES DÉPUTÉS

Hydro rates	
Ms. Lisa MacLeod	2344
Bob White	
Mr. Percy Hatfield	2344
Kindness Week	
Mr. John Fraser	2344

Canadian International AutoShow	
Mr. Michael Harris	2345

Nancy Diamond	
Ms. Jennifer K. French	2345

Consumer protection	
Mr. James J. Bradley	2345

Halton region	
Mr. Ted Arnott	2346

Covenant House Toronto	
Mr. Arthur Potts	2346

Soup Sisters	
Ms. Sylvia Jones	2346

REPORTS BY COMMITTEES / RAPPORTS DES COMITÉS

Standing Committee on the Legislative Assembly	
Mr. Monte McNaughton	2346
Report deemed adopted	2347

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS / DÉPÔT DES PROJETS DE LOI

Anti-Human Trafficking Act, 2017, Bill 96,	
Ms. Naidoo-Harris / Loi de 2017 contre la traite de personnes, projet de loi 96, Mme Naidoo-Harris	
First reading agreed to	2347
Hon. Indira Naidoo-Harris	2347

STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES / DÉCLARATIONS MINISTÉRIELLES ET RÉPONSES

Anti-bullying initiatives	
Hon. Mitzie Hunter	2347

Human trafficking	
Hon. Indira Naidoo-Harris	2348

Anti-bullying initiatives	
Mr. Lorne Coe	2348

Human trafficking	
Ms. Laurie Scott	2349

Anti-bullying initiatives	
Ms. Peggy Sattler	2349

Human trafficking	
Ms. Peggy Sattler	2350

PETITIONS / PÉTITIIONS

Hydro rates	
Mr. John Yakabuski	2350

Energy conservation	
Miss Monique Taylor	2351

Nanjing Massacre	
Ms. Soo Wong.....	2351
Road safety	
Mr. Ted Arnott	2351
School closures	
Mme France Gélinas	2351
Ice machines	
Mr. James J. Bradley.....	2352
Hydro rates	
Mr. Rick Nicholls.....	2352
Privatization of public assets	
Miss Monique Taylor.....	2352
Home inspection industry	
Mr. James J. Bradley.....	2353
Access to justice	
Mr. Jim McDonell.....	2353

ORDERS OF THE DAY / ORDRE DU JOUR

Medical Assistance in Dying Statute Law	
Amendment Act, 2017, Bill 84, Mr. Hoskins / Loi de 2017 modifiant des lois en ce qui concerne l'aide médicale à mourir, projet de loi 84, M. Hoskins	
Mme France Gélinas	2353
Mr. John Fraser	2360
Mr. Jim McDonell.....	2360
Ms. Jennifer K. French.....	2361
M. Shafiq Qaadri.....	2361
Mme France Gélinas	2361

Royal assent / Sanction royale	
The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller)	2362
Medical Assistance in Dying Statute Law	
Amendment Act, 2017, Bill 84, Mr. Hoskins / Loi de 2017 modifiant des lois en ce qui concerne l'aide médicale à mourir, projet de loi 84, M. Hoskins	
Hon. Kevin Daniel Flynn	2362
Ms. Sylvia Jones.....	2363
Mr. Wayne Gates	2364
Mr. John Fraser	2364
Mr. Victor Fedeli.....	2364
Hon. Kevin Daniel Flynn	2364
Mr. Randy Hillier	2365
Ms. Jennifer K. French.....	2366
Mr. John Fraser	2367
Mr. Rick Nicholls.....	2367
Mme France Gélinas	2367
Mr. Randy Hillier	2368
Second reading debate deemed adjourned	2368

ADJOURNMENT DEBATE / DÉBAT SUR LA MOTION D'AJOURNEMENT

Energy policies	
Mr. Todd Smith	2368
Mr. Bob Delaney	2368

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Wednesday 22 February 2017

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Mercredi 22 février 2017

The House met at 0900.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Good morning. Please join me in prayer.

Prayers.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): A point of order from the Minister of Energy.

Hon. Glenn Thibeault: Mr. Speaker, to end unfair winter disconnections, I seek unanimous consent that, notwithstanding standing order 30(a), I be permitted to introduce a bill at this time.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The Minister of Energy is seeking unanimous consent to put forth—

Mr. Gilles Bisson: A point of order.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): On the same point of order?

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Timmins–James Bay.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Could you just send a copy of the bill here, please? We're fine with the unanimous consent but we'd like to have a copy of the bill.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): A copy has been made. I'll wait.

Mr. Steve Clark: A point of order, Speaker.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): On the same point of order?

Mr. Steve Clark: While we're waiting, I just want to remind the minister that we could have done this yesterday.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Order, please.

Now, before I proceed: I gave some leeway in terms of the delivery of the bill, but that's not the issue right now. Right now it's seeking unanimous consent to put forward a motion. Now, do I have consent? Agreed? Agreed.

Minister.

Hon. Glenn Thibeault: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd also like to thank the House for their unanimous consent.

PROTECTING VULNERABLE ENERGY CONSUMERS ACT, 2017 LOI DE 2017 PROTÉGEANT LES CONSOMMATEURS D'ÉNERGIE VULNÉRABLES

Mr. Thibeault moved first reading of the following bill: Bill 95, An Act to amend the Ontario Energy Board Act, 1998 / Projet de loi 95, Loi modifiant la Loi de 1998 sur la Commission de l'énergie de l'Ontario.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Is it the pleasure of the House the motion carry? Carried.

First reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The minister for a short statement.

Hon. Glenn Thibeault: Now that the bill has received first reading, I seek unanimous consent that the order for second reading of Bill 95, An Act to amend the Ontario Energy Board Act, 1998, be called immediately and the question be put without debate or amendment; and

That in the event that Bill 95, An Act to amend the Ontario Energy Board Act, 1998, receive second reading, the order for third reading shall immediately be called and the question put without debate or amendment; and

That the votes on second and third readings may not be deferred.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The minister seeks unanimous consent that the order for second reading of Bill 95—

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: Dispense.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Dispense? Dispense. Agreed? Carried.

PROTECTING VULNERABLE ENERGY CONSUMERS ACT, 2017 LOI DE 2017 PROTÉGEANT LES CONSOMMATEURS D'ÉNERGIE VULNÉRABLES

Mr. Thibeault moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 95, An Act to amend the Ontario Energy Board Act, 1998 / Projet de loi 95, Loi modifiant la Loi de 1998 sur la Commission de l'énergie de l'Ontario.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Does the motion carry? Agreed? Agreed. Carried.

Second reading agreed to.

PROTECTING VULNERABLE ENERGY CONSUMERS ACT, 2017 LOI DE 2017 PROTÉGEANT LES CONSOMMATEURS D'ÉNERGIE VULNÉRABLES

Mr. Thibeault moved third reading of the following bill:

Bill 95, An Act to amend the Ontario Energy Board Act, 1998 / Projet de loi 95, Loi modifiant la Loi de 1998 sur la Commission de l'énergie de l'Ontario.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Do we agree? Carried.

Be it resolved that the bill do now carry as in the motion.

Third reading agreed to.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Point of order.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Point of order—the member from Timmins—James Bay on a point of order.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: I just wonder why this didn't happen yesterday. If we can have an explanation.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Actually, that's not a point of order, but I'll let you, as House leader, decide to talk to the House leader.

lature as a government to do everything we possibly can to ensure that young people are at the heart of our decision-making.

Many children, youth and families in this province struggle with barriers that leave them struggling to thrive, and it's our responsibility to break down those barriers to help ensure that our province's youth can succeed.

Young people need to be included as part of the solution. Protecting and supporting children and youth is not just an obligation, it is our moral imperative, our duty and our privilege—each and every one of us in this Legislature, our privilege—in shaping the future of this province.

I am so amazed and inspired by the hard work of people within the sector, community agencies and front-line workers right across this province who work every single day, often weekends and evenings, to make sure that our young children are protected. I want to thank OPSEU, CUPE, Unifor and all of our provincial advocates, including the Provincial Advocate for Children and Youth, for the work that they do. Our progress in supporting children and youth would not be possible without their efforts.

I'm proud of the work that our community partners do as they provide direct services to build stronger neighbourhoods and give people a sense of belonging in their communities. We thank them for servicing young people and families through very, very difficult times, for counselling and guiding them when they need it most, and for championing young people to reach their full potential as they move forward on that pathway. We thank them for their advocacy and for reminding us that our work as MPPs, our work as government officials, our work as service providers is never done.

0910

At the same time, many children and youth who receive services and support haven't experienced the success or positive outcomes we wish for them. This tells us that the current system needs to be improved for the youngest members in our community.

While various government initiatives, programs and policies address specific issues, what is most needed now is system change. This is why I'm so excited to be here today to speak about Bill 89, the proposed Supporting Children, Youth and Families Act, 2016. If approved, this bill will initially amend and then repeal and replace the current Child and Family Services Act, which I will refer to as the CFSA, the existing bill in the legislative framework that governs many of our province's programs and services for children and youth, including child welfare, youth justice services, secure treatment programs, child developmental services, licensed residential services for children and youth, community support services, indigenous child and family services, and adoption.

The legislation came into force back in 1985 to promote the best interests, protection and well-being of children and youth. However, we know now the legislation is outdated and it doesn't reflect the realities of today. This

ORDERS OF THE DAY

SUPPORTING CHILDREN, YOUTH AND FAMILIES ACT, 2017 LOI DE 2017 SUR LE SOUTIEN À L'ENFANCE, À LA JEUNESSE ET À LA FAMILLE

Mr. Coteau moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 89, An Act to enact the Child, Youth and Family Services Act, 2017, to amend and repeal the Child and Family Services Act and to make related amendments to other Acts / Projet de loi 89, Loi édictant la Loi de 2017 sur les services à l'enfance, à la jeunesse et à la famille, modifiant et abrogeant la Loi sur les services à l'enfance et à la famille et apportant des modifications connexes à d'autres lois.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Minister?

Hon. Michael Coteau: It is an honour for me to stand today to speak on this proposed legislation. I would like to let you know at this time, Mr. Speaker, that I'll be sharing my time with the member from Kingston and the Islands during this hour that I believe we have allocated.

I want to start off by acknowledging that we're gathered on the traditional territory of several indigenous nations, and I'd like to pay special attention to the Mississaugas of the New Credit. I also want to recognize the history and the significant contributions of First Nations, Inuit and Métis people here in this city, this region and this province.

I am pleased to speak on Bill 89, the proposed Supporting Children, Youth and Families Act of 2016 which, moving forward, I will refer to as the CYFSA. As was mentioned, I will be sharing my time with the PA who is responsible for this file.

Mr. Speaker, I stand here today committed to helping young people in our province reach their full potential. As an MPP, as the minister responsible for children and youth services, as the minister responsible for anti-racism, but I think most importantly as a community member, as an uncle and as a father of two young girls, I believe that it is of utmost importance here in this Legis-

is why we're proposing a comprehensive legislative change to build on our work today and improve the outcomes to support children and youth.

I'd like to take a moment to speak about the progress that has been achieved and the work that is being done to get to this point. I want to take a moment just to thank the folks back at the Ministry of Children and Youth Services. I have been a minister for under a year now, but I know that the government officials—

Mr. John Yakabuski: It seems longer.

Hon. Michael Coteau: The minister for this file for under a year.

It has been an incredible experience to meet the men and women who work at the ministry, who have been working on this legislation for years.

In the past decade, we've taken action to strengthen the child welfare system and to make system changes more responsive to individual family needs and to be accountable back to the public. As a result of these transformations, fewer children are coming into care; more children are being adopted into permanent homes; youth have more supports to transition into adulthood; and more children's aid societies are balancing their books and acting more efficiently.

In 2014 and 2015, we engaged with our communities and spoke with indigenous partners and hundreds of people across the province. We listened to children and youth, to families, to service providers and to advocates. We listened to them. They told us how legislation impacts them and how it could be strengthened to improve and support high-quality services and create more opportunities to support young people here in our province.

We heard from people right across the province: from Kingston to Timmins, Sudbury to Windsor, from London all the way to Thunder Bay. We also met with associations, advocates and experts, including the Ontario Association of Children's Aid Societies, the Association of Native Child and Family Services Agencies of Ontario, the Provincial Advocate for Children and Youth and, of course, the Premier's Council on Youth Opportunities. We were guided by the final recommendations from the Residential Services Review Panel's report titled *Because Young People Matter*.

As minister responsible for the province's Anti-Racism Directorate, I held community consultations across the province and spoke to people who shared their experiences in regard to discrimination. That also helped us craft this proposed legislation in a fair and inclusive way. Throughout the consultation process, the voices of youth were the strongest at the table.

We met with Our Voice Our Turn, a youth-led project initiated by the provincial advocate, as well as young people who experienced the in-care services here in Ontario. We engaged directly with First Nations, Métis, Inuit and urban indigenous partners to hear their recommendations on how we as a government can improve and support families. Service providers, youth and families were all clear in their message to government that the

current legislation must be updated to reflect the social changes that have taken place in this province over the last 30 years. What we heard from them was that children and youth feel that they're not being heard, that they want a better understanding of their rights, to have more emphasis on their rights in legislation, and to have their perspective represented. Our youth want and deserve to have their voices listened to.

Last December, I had the opportunity to hear directly from a young woman who was fleeing an abusive home in southwestern Ontario. She ended up struggling for several years, went through homelessness and living in shelters, and she was then accepted to Covenant House five years ago. Because of that ability to get into that shelter and to work with front-line workers, she went off to Humber. Now she is studying at Ryerson University and her objective today is to become a social worker so she can go back and help young people who are in the exact same situation as her.

At the end of the day, I think there's no doubt that every single person in this room wants us, as government officials, as members, as people who work for government, to ensure that young people are placed into the best possible situation so that they can reach their full potential and they can be active participants in society.

Front-line workers and youth put a spotlight on older youth needing access to protection services.

We listened when they told us the current legislation does not reflect the diversity in Ontario and services must be more inclusive and culturally appropriate for children and youth of all backgrounds. We know, certainly, that children and youth populations need specific attention and support. We heard that experiences by those impacted by the country's legacy of historical, geographical and social discrimination should be reflected in the legislation.

We heard from indigenous communities, and they've been clear that they want to come up with their own solutions to support their own children. We know from them now that increased community control over child and youth services is essential to improve outcomes for indigenous youth and families.

We heard the call for more accountability and transparency across the system, for clear performance expectations for service agencies, and that we must hold entities and individuals accountable for their actions and commitment to deliver the best possible child and youth family services available.

We also heard about the challenges young families and young people face as they try to navigate this often complex system. They are often made to repeat their stories over and over and over again to get the right type of services that they need. We recognize that we need to improve information sharing between our agencies.

I want to extend my sincere thanks and appreciation to the hundreds of individuals and organizations across the province who contributed their insights, experiences and expertise to improve this current proposed legislation. In particular, I would like to express my gratitude and ap-

preciation to the young people and the families who shared their experiences. Sometimes it's very hard to share with other people because these are tough situations and they're hard situations that people go through. But we received the message loud and clear: People want to see change, and the time has come to improve our legislation that governs many of the province's programs for children and youth and their families. So again, thank you to the children, to youth service providers and community organizations. The proposed CYFSA is now a positive and much-needed step towards modernizing and strengthening Ontario's child and family services so that our young people can succeed.

There are several goals we want to achieve through the legislation:

- centering children and youth in decision-making and strengthening their rights so that they have a voice when it comes to the services they need;

- improving the quality of services and consistency of supports offered to children, youth and their families;

- increasing accountability and oversight to service providers; and

- supporting First Nations, Métis and Inuit children and youth and their families through services that respect their culture, heritage and tradition.

The legislation seeks to accomplish these goals by focusing on four priorities: prevention and protection, quality improvement, accountability and oversight, and relationships with First Nations, Inuit and Métis people.

0920

The legislation first places an emphasis on protection and prevention, so that families receive the services they need to thrive. In our consultations, we listened to children, youth and families across the province who told us that the current legislation doesn't do enough to recognize and respect the diverse identities of children and youth. We also heard that it contains outdated, stigmatizing language.

The current legislation does not significantly identify the rights of children and youth, and it has become clear to us that we must enshrine their rights to have a say in the services and the care that they receive. That's why we're bringing this legislation into the modern world here today in Ontario: to affirm our commitments to children's rights, diversity and inclusion.

To begin with, through the proposed legislation we will affirm and strengthen the rights of children and youth receiving services to enhance their participation in the decision-making that affects them. From the outset, the proposed legislation sets a new tone for how to approach child and youth services here in Ontario. The preamble acknowledges that the aim of the CYFSA is to be consistent and to build upon the principles of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. The preamble reaffirms Ontario's commitment to children's rights, and it supports a child- and youth-centred lens through which the rest of the proposed legislation should be viewed. It is time that we give children and

youth a seat at the table in decision-making about the services that they receive.

The proposed act goes on to include a clear—and affirms the rights of all children and youth receiving services under the proposed CYFSA. These rights include the right to participate in the decisions that affect them, and that children and youth must be informed of their rights when receiving their services.

The legislation incorporates and aligns directly with the visions and goals of Katelynn's Principle by clearly stating that every child is an individual whose rights must be respected and whose voice must be heard. It recognizes that children and youth receiving services under the proposed CYFSA have the right to express their views freely and safely about matters that affect them; have their views given due weight in accordance with the age of maturity; be consulted on the nature of services they are receiving and advised on the decisions that are made; raise concerns or recommend changes without interference or fear of coercion, discrimination and reprisal; and be informed of these rights and the existence of services that protect those rights, like the services provided through the Provincial Advocate for Children and Youth.

This proposed legislation affirms Ontario's commitment to diversity and inclusion, and seeks to address—

Interjections.

Hon. Michael Coteau: Guys, come on. You should be listening to this. This is important stuff.

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Are we all done? Thank you.

Continue.

Hon. Michael Coteau: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate that.

Again, it affirms Ontario's commitment to diversity and inclusion, and seeks to address the barriers of systemic racism. Advocates and the public have raised powerful concerns about the overrepresentation of black, indigenous and other racialized children and youth in our child welfare system.

We have heard the call to provide services in a manner that respects and helps preserve young people's cultural identity, so the proposed CYFSA emphasizes that services should be provided in a manner that takes into account a young person's cultural and linguistic needs as well as their race, ancestry, place of origin, colour, ethnic origin, citizenship, family diversity, disability, creed—which includes religion—sex, sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression.

This means that services will be more inclusive and more culturally appropriate for children and youth. It also means that service providers will have clear expectations on how they work with children and youth so that people will have more culturally appropriate experiences when receiving these services. Ultimately, it means that the government, in both the letter and the spirit of the law, respects children and young people.

I'd like to take the next few minutes to talk about child protection. Under the current legislation, access to child

protection services is limited to children and youth up to 16 years of age—or under 16 years of age, to be more specific—and up to 18 if a child has already been subject to a child protection court order. This means that children's aid societies and indigenous child well-being societies are not currently allowed to deliver services to many vulnerable 16- and 17-year-olds who need help. This is probably one of the pieces in the legislation that I think is so needed in this province.

It currently means that 16- and 17-year-olds who need protection may be referred to other community services like shelters. But when it's not safe for a 16- or 17-year-old to live in a home, we realize they may have fewer options left to them. Older youth who have been abused or neglected have higher risks of experiencing homelessness, mental health issues, substance abuse, violence and human trafficking. So 16- and 17-year-olds who need protection should be able to access services that keep them safe and provide them with the ability to reach their full potential. I'm proud of this proposed legislation that will raise the age of protection to 18. It will ensure that 16- and 17-year-olds have access to the full range of child protection services they need.

Increasing the age of protection will mean that children's aid societies and indigenous well-being societies can investigate reports of 16- and 17-year-olds who may be in need of protection and provide services to these young people to keep them safe, to help them successfully transition to adulthood and reduce their risk of experiencing homelessness and other poor outcomes.

These changes will bring our province in alignment with other provinces and territories here in Canada that have mandated child protection services to apply to all persons up to the age of 18. Sixteen- and 17-year-olds may not be children anymore, but we could all agree that they're not adults. This is still a vulnerable age and they may still need protection. Providing support to these young people is the right thing to do.

I cannot underestimate the significant, positive impact that these changes will have in some of our most vulnerable youth here in the province of Ontario. Within the first year of implementation alone, we know that the proposed legislation, if it's adopted by this Legislature, will take in an additional 1,600 young people to access child protection. That is 1,600 young people who will have a safer path towards adulthood; 1,600 young people who will have a better chance of reaching their full potential.

Mr. Speaker, I want to draw your attention to the bill's emphasis on prevention. We know that vulnerabilities and challenges can happen early in a child's life and that many of these children and youth end up having the same repeated interactions with protection services. For example, close to 43% of homeless youth have had previous involvement in child protection services. The proposed CYFSA confirms Ontario's commitment to prevention, early intervention, community support and strength-based services to avoid crisis situations from recurring, and to prevent involvement with child protection services.

It also guards the safety of vulnerable children from other provinces so that when a young person moves between provinces, there may be child protection orders that were made in accordance through child welfare legislation in the child's province or territory of origin. Unlike current legislation, the proposed CYFSA provides Ontario societies with the power to enforce the extra-provincial child protection order. This would further support the safety and protection of children who cross provincial and territorial borders.

0930

Finally, Mr. Speaker, on the topic of prevention and protection, I would like to speak about some of the important changes that are being proposed to youth justice.

It's important to note that we've made some great progress in this province when it comes to our youth justice system. I think at this point I would hope that all members of the Legislature listen to this important piece because I think it's something that we can all be proud of.

Since 2003, here in the province of Ontario, the youth crime rate has dropped 46%. Youth justice custody admission has declined by 83% and thousands of young people are accessing over 400 community-based programs that help them avoid reoffending in the future. This is happening right across Ontario in all of our ridings. I think we should all be proud of that.

The unique nature of the justice system setting means that custody or detention facilities require certain measures to keep youth and staff safe that are distinct from other models of residential care. These measures must be properly regulated. We have policies and practices in place in our youth justice system to guide the use of measures such as mechanical restraints and searches in youth justice facilities. But these policies and practices are not codified in the current legislation.

The proposed CYFSA sets out clear authority and limits on the use of mechanical restraints and the use of searches in youth justice facilities. The new legislation limits and codifies current practices in legislation, setting out requirements for the use of mechanical restraint equipment, including:

- that mechanical restraints must never be used as a means of punishment;
- the circumstances under which restraints can be used; and
- the authority to set out additional requirements in the regulations.

The new proposed legislation ensures that use of mechanical restraints is temporary and limited to protect the safety and well-being of young people and their caregivers.

The proposed CYFSA allows the authority to search a person's property and vehicles at a youth justice or detention centre. It also provides regulation-making authority to set out criteria for conducting these searches. They will help ensure service providers are giving high-quality care and protecting the safety and well-being of young people.

Lastly, Mr. Speaker, in regard to this particular point, I would like to discuss the misconceptions which arose from the term “secure isolation,” present in the current legislation. I want to emphasize that youth in secure isolation are not left alone without human contact or supervision for extended periods of time. This is why the new proposed CYFSA changes the term to “secure de-escalation.” This term more accurately reflects the nature and objective of this practice that continues to acknowledge that the practice is secure, while making it clear that staff involvement is focusing on de-escalating the current situation.

These approaches will continue to be used only as a last resort and with an objective of keeping youth in the facility safe. Staff currently are, and will continue to be, present and actively working to de-escalate the situation and return a young person to their previous setting as quickly as possible. If a youth is putting another youth or staff person at risk or potential harm—for example, aggressive or violent behaviour—it is our responsibility to make sure that all young people in that facility are safe.

Our system has many non-violent youth, and if another youth is being violent, it is our responsibility to remove them from the situation for the safety of everyone in the facility.

Between 2010 and 2016 there has been a 75% decrease in placement in secure de-escalation in Ontario’s youth and justice facilities. We have achieved this decline by supporting, training and supervising staff to use alternatives wherever possible. We want this to continue to decline within our facilities. That is exactly why we’re listening to stakeholders to figure out what we can do to make it even better for young people in these facilities. We have accepted many of the recommendations that have come from the provincial advocate and, in fact, we’re in the process currently of improving and implementing some of those pieces.

I have a couple of minutes left and I want to end by saying this: That here in the province of Ontario, as MPPs, as government officials, as people, as advocates, as fieldworkers—the people who are out there in the sector supporting our young people—as community members, as taxpayers, as grandparents, as uncles and parents, we all have a moral obligation to ensure that our young people are taken care of. Again, there is no doubt in my mind that every single member in this Legislature wants to continue to explore ways to ensure that young people in our province are set up for success.

The proposed legislation works with some of our young people—our children and youth—who are most vulnerable in the system. It is important that this proposed piece of legislation goes through a committee process that allows for people to comment to ensure that it is a piece of proposed legislation that is best positioned to do just that, to ensure that young people here in the province of Ontario have the opportunity to reach their full potential, to avoid those barriers that may exist out there and to ensure that they are set up for success.

Recently, I had the opportunity to meet some young people who have gone through the child protection

system. I met a group of them, several of them, and we sat down for probably half an hour to an hour and had a discussion around their experiences in the system. Make no mistake; there were challenges, there were complaints. But at the end of the day, the young people I was speaking to had the opportunity to go through the system, to sometimes land in foster care, where they felt that they were provided with opportunities to be adopted, and some stayed within the system without going through adoption or foster care.

We have to ensure, as responsible members of society, that young people like I met have the opportunity to go to post-secondary education, to finish high school, to be able to go out there and participate in the workforce, to be able to build a family, to be able to participate in our economy, to be able to grow old and retire in this province, and to really live a full life, despite where they start in life. I know that we’re committed as a government to ensure that we move forward in a direction that allows for this to happen.

I truly believe that this proposed legislation, if passed by this Legislature, is a step in the right direction, with some significant changes. I’m proud, as the member for Don Valley East but also as the minister responsible for children and youth, to be here to participate in this process. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Further debate?

Ms. Sophie Kiwala: It’s an honour to rise today to speak to this very important legislation, Bill 89, the proposed Supporting Children, Youth and Families Act, 2016, which, if approved, will amend and then repeal and replace the current Child and Family Services Act with the Children, Youth and Family Services Act, 2016, which I will refer to as the proposed CYFSA. This is an historic moment in child protection. I will be discussing some of the technical details of this bill. I know that I have your undivided attention and I do thank you for that.

The proposed CYFSA reflects the commitment that we have made to help young people across the province reach their full potential by strengthening and modernizing child and youth services. As discussed by my colleague the Honourable Minister of Children and Youth Services, the proposed legislation, if passed, would put children at the centre of decision-making. It would put the focus on early intervention to prevent more children and families from reaching crises in the very first place. It would help make services more culturally appropriate for all children in the child welfare system, including indigenous and black children and youth, so they receive the best possible support. It would also help improve the oversight of service providers, including children’s aid societies.

0940

Before I elaborate on how we’re planning to improve the quality of services and oversight of providers, I want to thank all the members of the public, stakeholders and partners who have already provided their input on the proposed CYFSA. We value their commitment to pro-

pecting young people and we'll work closely with them on the next steps to improve services for children, youth and their families.

As my colleague mentioned, the second key area of the proposed legislation is quality improvement. In addition to clarifying provisions and openness for adoption, the legislation also provides for the collection of personal information, including identity-based data and improved services through better data sharing.

We've heard concerns that certain populations are overrepresented in the child welfare system and that the system should be doing a better job of serving them. We've heard that systemic racism creates barriers that increase the risk of black, indigenous and other racialized families and communities having involvement with the child welfare system. I echo my colleague's call that, as government, we have a moral duty—not just a professional one, a moral duty—to help break these barriers.

Currently, there is limited collection, analysis and reporting of identity-based data by service providers. This means that sometimes providers may not be aware of the realities and needs of the populations they serve. This is why the proposed legislation includes authority for the ministry to request ministry-funded or licensed service providers to collect certain personal information from clients, which includes race-based information, and to report that information to the ministry. Collecting this data will support better service planning and the delivery of culturally appropriate services, and it will improve the outcomes for black and indigenous youth and children and other marginalized populations.

Mr. Speaker, better information sharing is also vital so that children and families do not have to keep telling their stories over and over again. The current legislation, the Child and Family Services Act, which I will refer to as the CFSA, does not include a legislative framework for the collection, use and disclosure of personal information. For example, CFSA does not have clear rules to provide individuals a right to access their own personal information held by service providers. It does not provide rules to guide service providers when sharing information with each other about the children, youth and families that they serve. It also does not provide clear authority to collect the high-quality data that is needed to effectively support planning and oversight of the child, youth and families sector.

This is why the proposed legislation sets out clear rules for the collection, use, disclosure of and access to personal information held by agencies and other service providers. It enshrines the right of individuals to access their personal information or request a correction, and the right to file a complaint or an appeal if they disagree with decisions made about their personal information or if they believe that their privacy was violated.

While I recognize that these changes seem to be administrative, good data is essential to support planning and to improve services that have a real impact on children, youth and their families.

I'd also like to talk about the sustainability of the child welfare sector. In 2009, we established the Commission

to Promote Sustainable Child Welfare, an independent body that provided expertise and an objective perspective on how to set the system on a path to long-term sustainability.

The commission noted that the system had many strengths. Ontario's model of local, independently governed societies that build upon trusting relationships in the communities they serve is a strong one. It benefits from the expertise and experience of front-line workers, foster parents, volunteers and community partners. I know that in my community, I include in that realm Family and Children's Services of Frontenac, Lennox and Addington. I include their workers and their board. These organizations are doing critical work in our communities.

The commission also noted that the system was changing. With the support of the commission, 13 societies amalgamated into six new societies, and this was a good thing. Amalgamation helped these societies to better respond to the needs of the children, youth and families they were serving. So the commission recommended further amalgamations of smaller children's aid societies to develop the capacity, expertise and networks to improve services in their communities. In 2015, the Auditor General recommended that the government consider opportunities to improve efficiencies of service delivery, including further society amalgamations. When it is in the public interest, we feel that the government should be able to respond effectively to improve efficiency and consistency of services. This is why the proposed legislation introduces the legal authority for the minister to compel amalgamations and dissolutions of societies when it is in the public interest to do so.

Let me be clear: There are no immediate plans to compel amalgamations. We will continue to partner with children's aid societies through the Ontario Association of Children's Aid Societies to support voluntary and phased amalgamations. We hope that through consultation with societies and communities, there will be voluntary restructuring to improve services to children, youth and their families.

In keeping with the principle that First Nations, Inuit and Métis people should be able to provide their own child and family services, the government is not proposing to compel amalgamations of indigenous child well-being societies.

Next, I'd like to speak to the important work that we are doing to modernize licensed residential services for children and youth. Last year, the government released Because Young People Matter, as the minister referred to, a report on Ontario's residential services for children and youth. The Residential Services Review Panel that put together the report met with parents, foster parents, service providers and independent experts across the province, as well as youth who shared their personal experiences. Key input came from these youth, including First Nations, Métis and Inuit youth; those who identified as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and two-spirited; youth with special needs; racialized youth; and

those involved in youth justice and child welfare services. We value the expert panel's advice and each of their recommendations.

In addition, we value the recent reports by the Provincial Advocate for Children and Youth and other stakeholders which will help inform the ministry's next steps to improve licensed residential services for children and youth in Ontario.

In addition to changes proposed in the legislation, we are building a blueprint for the reform of residential services that incorporates the voices of youth and focuses on improving quality of care for children and youth. Working in partnership with the Provincial Advocate for Children and Youth, we have established a youth panel to ensure that young people are at the very centre of this process. The youth panel is providing input to the government on how to improve quality of care and better reflect youth voices in residential services. We have also begun work with indigenous partners to co-develop a plan that will address the specific needs of First Nations, Métis, Inuit and urban indigenous children and youth.

0950

While we have made progress, we recognize that there is more work to be done. For example, the legislative licensing requirements for children and youth residential services have been in place for over 30 years, with limited changes in requirements or processes. The current CFSA and its regulations do not set out a robust or modernized licensing and compliance scheme for licensed residential settings. For example, there are limited quality standards, and there is no requirement for licensing and compliance information to be shared publicly.

The current provisions are limited, and they do not reflect modern approaches to oversee residential services for children and youth. Mr. Speaker, this is why the proposed legislation seeks to improve the licensing framework for residential settings through proposed new and enhanced authorities. It will help provide oversight of licensed residential services to help improve the quality of care for children and youth.

Let me expand on that. In direct response to recommendations made by the Residential Services Review Panel, the proposed CYFSA includes new powers for an inspector to conduct inspections of licensed residential settings, with or without a warrant. It would help enhance the requirements to get and keep a licence. It also includes expanded grounds for the ministry to refuse to issue, renew or revoke a licence, and would expand the types of residential care requiring a licence in regulation.

The proposed legislation would also include new authority to publish certain licensing and compliance information to help inform decision-making about placement for children and youth. The proposed updates would include enhancing the criteria to obtain and retain a licence, and it would remove the provision about entitlement to a licence in the current CFSA.

Together with the residential services blueprint that is being developed, the proposed legislation would create

room to improve the quality of care in residential settings by enhancing the standards and introducing new protective measures which will help build public confidence in the system.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to discuss the third key area of legislation: accountability and oversight. Child and youth services include a wide range of service partners. They include children's aid societies, transfer payment agencies and lead agencies for mental health. It's through them that our policies and programs are put into practice to reach children and youth all across this province.

It is our responsibility to have in place appropriate checks and balances and accountability mechanisms all throughout the system. This is an essential part of protecting the children and youth who use these very services. Currently, under the existing CFSA, there are limited compliance, accountability, and performance improvement tools for children's aid societies and for transfer payment recipients.

In 2015, the Auditor General called for improved society oversight and accountability. It echoed the concerns from the Provincial Advocate for Children and Youth, the Commission to Promote Sustainable Child Welfare and recommendations from numerous coroners' inquests. That is why the proposed legislation would help set clear expectations and put in place the very tools that will support modernized oversight. It would provide a suite of powers to address non-compliance and matters of public interest, such as quality of services or financial and operational management of societies.

First, the minister would be able to issue a compliance order to direct a children's aid society to take specific actions to comply or prepare, submit and implement a plan for achieving compliance. For example, this would be when a society fails to comply with the act or its regulations.

Second, the minister may take a number of other actions where a society has failed to comply with the compliance order, where it is in the public interest to do so, or when there is a situation requiring immediate intervention, for example, threat to a person's health, safety or well-being.

Such other actions include appointing or replacing a minority of board members, including designating or replacing the board chair. Such actions include appointing a supervisor to temporarily operate and manage a children's aid society. The minister would be required to provide notice to a children's aid society before taking these actions, and the society would have the right to make written submissions for the minister's consideration.

Increased accountability and financial oversight helps build a stronger children and youth system. It helps ensure efficiency, effectiveness and compliance with legislative requirements, and it helps service providers by allowing more resources to go towards providing those services. Most importantly, it reassures Ontarians that we are doing our job and making sure that service providers are doing theirs also.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to talk about the role of lead agencies in delivering mental health services for children and youth. Lead agencies are being established across this province to be leaders in the implementation of Moving on Mental Health, and to work with partners like schools and hospitals that play a role in children's lives so that children and youth receive the right services at the right time. These lead agencies will lead the planning work so that essential child and youth mental health services are available in their communities.

The proposed legislation supports this work by enabling the designation of lead agencies and the authority to prescribe their functions. These changes are part of the ongoing transformation of the child and youth mental health sector.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, I want to emphasize that improving the system is an effort that requires input and planning. This is why the proposed CYFSA provides the authority for the Minister of Children and Youth Services to appoint members to an advisory group to provide guidance on child well-being, including child welfare. This group will include partners across the child welfare and residential service sectors. With their help, we will be able to develop effective policy and programs and improve services and outcomes for children and youth.

Mr. Speaker, we have heard from experts, stakeholders and people with lived experience that we must strengthen accountability and oversight, and the proposed CYFSA will provide us with the tools to do just that. It is our responsibility to enhance governance to improve services for children and youth, and this is our chance to do so.

This brings me to the fourth area of the legislation: relationships with First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples. The government is committed to supporting First Nations, Métis and Inuit children, youth and families through an acknowledgement of our government's unique relationships with indigenous peoples and through services that respect indigenous cultures, heritage and traditions.

I want to reflect for a moment on what we have heard from many indigenous children, youth, families and leaders. They have told us that indigenous children are sometimes sent far away from home to other parts of the province, to big cities and to unfamiliar places. They have told us that the current system leaves families and friends at home worried and heartbroken, compounding trauma in communities that have, more often than not, already experienced tremendous amounts of grief because of this country's history of residential schools. And the current legislation does not adequately reflect the unique relationship between the government and First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples living in Ontario. Current definitions in the CFSAs are disrespectful and restrict access to existing provisions to status First Nations children and families.

1000

The proposed legislation acknowledges the unique relationship between Ontario and indigenous peoples and references the United Nations Declaration on the Rights

of Indigenous Peoples and Jordan's Principle. It acknowledges that First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples are constitutionally recognized peoples in Canada with their own laws and distinct cultural, political and historical ties to Ontario.

The proposed legislation expands and modernizes language that is out of date and stigmatizing by replacing it with a more inclusive term, as well as allowing for self-identification. It repeals terms like "Indian" and "native" and replaces them with "First Nations, Inuk or Métis child" and "First Nations, Inuit and Métis children and families." It also requires societies to make all reasonable efforts to pursue a plan for customary care for First Nations, Inuit and Métis children and youth in need of protection. As much and as often as possible, we will honour the traditions of indigenous communities, including customary care, by supporting efforts to keep children close to home and all that is familiar.

The proposed legislation also supports the implementation of the Ontario Indigenous Children and Youth Strategy. Through the strategy, indigenous communities and the government are building stronger bonds and transforming services and systems to meet the needs of indigenous children and youth. This will support First Nations, Métis and Inuit communities to have a holistic, culturally based and community-driven approach to children and youth services.

The strategy will focus on transforming Ontario's relationship with indigenous youth and children and their families; enhancing First Nations jurisdiction and indigenous control for indigenous children and youth services; prioritizing preventive services that are culturally appropriate for indigenous children and youth; building a high-quality, integrated services network that supports indigenous children and youth; and enabling government and indigenous service providers to track and evaluate their work in implementing the strategy.

We have listened to indigenous partners in all parts of the province and understand that while there are many common issues, there are also cultural needs, as well as geographic needs, that must be met and recognized. We are committed to continuing the conversation and working with them on how to keep children safe and cared for, and I am confident that this legislation will steer us down a positive path.

One thing that we have heard loud and clear is that change and improvement are required to our existing child welfare services. We know that for too long the system has focused on the problems that are facing children and youth and not enough on their voices, their opinions, their thoughts and their goals.

To conclude, I would like to summarize the purpose of Bill 89, the proposed Supporting Children, Youth and Families Act, 2016. If passed, the legislation will put the focus where it belongs, on children and youth. It would replace the current Child and Family Services Act with a modern, child-centred act that at its very core would strengthen the rights of children and youth so that they have a voice in decisions that affect the services they

receive. The legislation would recognize the importance of diversity and inclusion and it would build on the goals of Katelynn's Principle by clearly stating that every child—every child—needs to be heard and respected.

The legislation would accomplish these goals by focusing on four priority areas. First, the legislation would place an emphasis on protection and prevention so that families receive the services that they need in order to thrive. This means a stronger commitment to prevention and early intervention to help families and children avoid reaching a crisis in the first place. It means better supporting the delivery of culturally appropriate services for all communities in Ontario, and it means raising the age of protection to provide all 16- and 17-year-olds in need of protection access to child protection services. This change will help reduce the risk of homelessness, human trafficking and mental health issues.

Second, the legislation would emphasize quality improvement to support better coordinated, more efficient services with better information sharing, so that young people and their families do not have to tell their stories repeatedly.

Third, the legislation would improve accountability and oversight so that checks and balances within the system are strong and children and youth are better protected.

Finally, we will support First Nations, Métis and Inuit children, youth and families through an acknowledgment of our government's unique relationships with indigenous peoples.

The legislation and the associated reforms are a huge step forward, but I want to emphasize that they are the first step. Reform will not happen overnight. Our goal is clear: to see happy, healthy young people and families enjoy the high quality of life and opportunities that our province offers. That goal is reinforced by a shared commitment to improving outcomes for Ontario's most vulnerable, so that they can learn, grow, thrive and reach their full potential.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Questions and comments?

Mrs. Gila Martow: I'm very pleased to rise and comment. We heard some great notes and comments about how we're moving forward in the child welfare system. We're discussing Bill 89, the Supporting Children, Youth and Families Act. I just want to say—to remind everybody—that the Auditor General has made many recommendations; that there are deficiencies. So it's great that we're moving forward and we're all looking forward to seeing progress and improvements.

We have a system that we would like to see more child-centred. We want youth and children to be as engaged as they can be in an age-appropriate way and depending on their circumstances. We are hearing that the government is recognizing what we have been saying on this side of the House. I would remind everybody that my colleague from Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry had a bill that passed second reading in 2015 asking for youth ages 16 and older to be able to enter the child welfare

system for the first time, and that is part of this legislation.

Of course, we're concerned about the cost of that and how much demand there is going to be for that. We are also concerned with the CPIN and how it is being rolled out and implemented and some of its limitations. Yes, it's progress, but we can't always be implementing technology that was at its peak a few years back. We have to move quicker with technology in the province of Ontario, even anticipate what the demands will be for new technology so that data can be transferred easily and get the best advice we can from people in the IT sector.

We should be speaking to the people who work: the foster parents, the kids—get them engaged. Let's hear what they want to comment on and make suggestions.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Questions and comments?

Miss Monique Taylor: I'm pleased to have the opportunity to respond in two minutes' time. I'm looking forward to the hour that I will be able to spend on this bill in the Legislature in the upcoming time.

I have to say that we welcome these changes that are being incorporated. We're thrilled to see Katelynn's Principle reflected. We're thrilled to see Jordan's Principle reflected. We are thrilled to see the work of youth, through the child advocate's office, that is being incorporated into this bill here before us. But we do have concerns. I'm concerned about the amount going into regulation compared to what is in the legislation. There is a lot that's going into regulation and what happens in regulation isn't debated in this House. It doesn't go for public consultation. So there's a lot of concerns as to what, quite frankly, the government won't have to do if they don't choose to put them into regulation.

1010

I think we are moving in the right direction, but we need to make sure that it's strong. We need to make sure that the principles are enacted, solid, and not just in the preamble. Quite frankly, we should be enacting Katelynn's Principle Act, Bill 57, and that's not just from me, as it is my own bill, but it comes from UNICEF. They think that the two bills should go hand in hand, making sure that this legislation has teeth, that all of those important aspects of this bill actually have some legislation behind them to make sure that there are measurements that we can test to make sure that they are working.

I'm concerned about the lack of funding dollars that have been spoken about to this point. We can't ask people to do more and not give them the funding to do just that.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Minister of Education.

Hon. Mitzie Hunter: I'm very pleased to rise today in support of Bill 89, the Supporting Children, Youth and Families Act, 2016.

I know, personally, the importance of families to children in providing a loving and secure environment for them to grow up. Our government is committed to doing

everything we possibly can so that children are given the best start in life. If passed, the proposed Child, Youth and Family Services Act would provide a modern child- and youth-centred legislative framework to strengthen services and better protect and care for some of Ontario's most vulnerable young people.

I am particularly pleased to see what this piece of legislation does in providing child-centred, focused legislation. I know, in speaking with the provincial advocate for children, how important it is to listen to children, to listen to what they care about, their concerns and their needs, and to ensure that those needs are being heard and responded to. This legislation emphasizes the importance of a child's own culture, heritage and traditions. It recognizes the need for diversity, for inclusion, and that systemic biases and racism must be addressed in the delivery of all services to children and to families. This ensures that everyone understands that these rights and responsibilities will be part of this new legislation and will be enshrined. It upholds principles that are embedded in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and also incorporates Katelynn's Principle as well, clearly stating that every child needs to be heard and respected.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): The member from Dufferin–Caledon.

Ms. Sylvia Jones: I am happy to rise and add my two-minute comments to the minister's and the parliamentary assistant's speeches this morning. I trust the government members aren't going to knock their backs out by congratulating themselves, because this legislation is 30 years old. We are actually the only jurisdiction left in Canada that does not protect children up to the age of 18. Bill 89 will do that. I think it's a good step. I know we've been calling for it on this side for many years through private members' bills.

The explanatory notes have some very positive words in them. My concern is that the judiciary and the justice system do not use the explanatory notes; they use the legislation. We have to get this right, because if we are only updating this every 30 years, then it is incumbent on us to make sure that we get it right this time, going forward. I am concerned that there are issues in Bill 89 that have a little too much—how shall I say?—wiggle room for the minister to act unilaterally. I would like to see a lot more clarity in some of those issues, and I hope, moving forward, that we can have an open and transparent discussion about that—with some very positive amendments that will strengthen Bill 89—because it's needed.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): The member from Kingston and the Islands has two minutes.

Ms. Sophie Kiwala: Thank you, everyone, for your comments today.

Thank you to the member from Thornhill. I'm pleased to hear that you're pleased that this is a child- and youth-centred focus.

To the member for Hamilton Mountain: Yes, I think it's extremely important that we incorporate the many

principles, Jordan's Principle and Katelynn's Principle etc. It is a robust, comprehensive bill.

The Minister of Education has discussed the importance of a very good and solid start in life. One thing that I do want to say, and acknowledge, is the United Way in Kingston and the Islands, which has produced a youth homelessness strategy. They recognize that it's extremely important to access youth within the first two weeks. I think it's important to say that the very important step, to make sure that children who are 16 and 17 years old have care, is extremely critical. It will prevent many youth from becoming homeless and from getting involved in crime and drugs etc.

To the member from Dufferin–Caledon: Yes, we are proud of this piece of legislation. It is time, and we are making some very important decisions. It's a very comprehensive piece of legislation. I have seen the minister engage with these communities across the province, with indigenous communities. I have seen his commitment first-hand, and I've been together with him in these communities when we have been having those very important conversations.

I have full faith that this piece of legislation will be comprehensive and will successfully protect and nurture children all across the province.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Thank you.

Second reading debate deemed adjourned.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): It being 10:15, this House stands recessed until 10:30 this morning.

The House recessed from 1017 to 1030.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Mr. Rick Nicholls: It's my pleasure to welcome to the assembly this morning, from the great riding of Chatham–Kent–Essex, Jeremy Dean, who is part of the model Parliament. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Mr. Han Dong: I would like to introduce the Sanjin youth entrepreneur association president. Mr. Jun Li is with us in the members' gallery. Welcome.

Mr. John Yakabuski: I'd like to welcome to the Legislature this morning, participating in the model Parliament from my riding of Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke, Kordell Walsh and Kathryn Nicol. Welcome.

Mr. James J. Bradley: I'd like to introduce Joe Salter of St. Catharines, a graduate student who is working in my office on a volunteer basis at this time.

Mr. Victor Fedeli: I'd like to introduce from the model Parliament, from the riding of Nipissing, Mr. Garrett Ryan. I also would like to introduce my executive assistant from my North Bay constituency office, Andrea Stoppa.

Hon. Tracy MacCharles: I too want to introduce someone here for the model Parliament: David De Paiva from Pickering–Scarborough East. I think there are others here from my riding too, and the region of Durham. I just want to say welcome to all participants today.

Mrs. Gila Martow: I'm pleased to see that my friend Sam Eskenasi is here today to join us. He's working with the naturopathic doctors.

And it's so nice to see everybody wearing pink today. In case anybody is wondering, it's Pink Shirt Day, for anti-bullying.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services.

Hon. Marie-France Lalonde: Nice to see you, Mr. Speaker. It is a great honour to have my daughter, Monica, ici aujourd'hui avec moi dans l'Assemblée. Je voulais la saluer en vos noms. Merci beaucoup.

Mr. Steve Clark: Speaker, I want to introduce to you and, through you, to members of the Legislative Assembly two constituents from my riding who are here for the model Parliament. I'd like to introduce to the members Callie MacIntyre and Sahaana Ranganathan.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: I would like to introduce and welcome the cousin of page captain Annisa Emanuel, Christine Sountharanaygam. Welcome, and enjoy your time in the Legislature.

Mr. Ted McMeekin: I'd like to introduce the guests of page captain Ismael Alaichi: parents Laila and Ali Alaichi, and siblings Jacob, Phatima, Kamal and Raphael. They're in the public gallery this morning. Welcome.

Mr. Robert Bailey: I'd like to welcome to the Legislature today, for the model Parliament, Ana Stathakis from my riding of Sarnia-Lambton.

Ms. Daiene Vernile: It gives me great pleasure to welcome to the Legislature two bright young men from the great riding of Kitchener Centre who are participating in the model Parliament. They are Ethan McCready and William Stuart. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Ms. Sylvia Jones: Please join me in welcoming Stephanie Milone, Marie and Tony Milone, and Elizabeth and Leo Lopes, family members of page captain Benjamin Milone.

Ms. Jennifer K. French: I would also like to welcome, from my riding of Oshawa, Kevin Zheng, who is here for the model Parliament. Welcome to the Legislature.

Ms. Ann Hoggarth: I'd like to welcome Julian Ward, who is here today with the model Parliament, from the city of Barrie. He is the son of Councillor Barry Ward.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: It is a great day today because we have two students from Nepean-Carleton joining us for the model Parliament. I would like to welcome Matthew O'Connor and Maxime Chouinard from the city of Ottawa, who are here today.

Mr. Percy Hatfield: I have three young students here for the model Parliament from Windsor-Tecumseh. I'd like to welcome Nicholas Harris, Hannah Ruuth and Anthony Lenarduzzi. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Hon. Glenn Thibeault: I, too, want to welcome three constituents from my riding here for the model Parliament: Josue Kurke, Alexander Cimino and Emily Ranta.

Mr. Jack MacLaren: I'd like to welcome today a student from my riding who is here for the Ontario model Parliament: Mallory Long.

M. Michael Mantha: J'aimerais souhaiter la bienvenue à Frederic Diebel de Espanola, qui est présentement ici pour le Parlement modèle. Bienvenue, mon ami.

Ms. Soo Wong: I want to welcome the two students from Dr. Norman Bethune who are here today for the model Parliament: Jacky Duong and David Ye. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Ms. Sylvia Jones: Also participating in the model Parliament from Dufferin-Caledon, please welcome Lily Crump.

Miss Monique Taylor: I'm very thrilled to welcome Fred Hahn into the House today along with the workers from the Nipissing, Parry Sound and Muskoka children's aid societies. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Hon. Michael Coteau: I would also like to join the member opposite in welcoming the members from Nipissing and Parry Sound, who work tirelessly to advocate for our children. Thank you very much for being at the Legislature today.

Mr. Raymond Sung Joon Cho: I'm very happy to welcome John Gobin for model Parliament from my riding, Scarborough-Rouge River.

Mr. Han Dong: I would like to welcome today in the gallery the Diversity Institute of Ryerson University. They have been gracious enough to participate in pre-budget consultations and later on will be hosted by me and the member from Etobicoke Centre. Please join me to welcome the Diversity Institute at Ryerson University in the members' gallery.

Mr. Norm Miller: I'd like to welcome workers with the Nipissing and Parry Sound Children's Aid Society, a number that I met with this morning: Beverley Patchell; Melissa Beck from Port Loring; Laura Brandt from Magnetawan; Stephen Kissoon from Sundridge; and I believe Debbie Hill, the local president, is also going to be arriving with a group of them today.

Ms. Jennifer K. French: I see that we have in the gallery Chris Buckley, president of the OFL, president Fred Hahn of CUPE Ontario and secretary-treasurer Candace Rennick here. Welcome.

Mr. Victor Fedeli: I, too, would like to welcome the many locked-out children's aid workers from the North Bay and Parry Sound areas, led by CUPE Local 2049 president Debbie Hill, who I have met with in my office and will meet later today in my office, and accompanied by CUPE Ontario president Fred Hahn and secretary-treasurer Candace Rennick.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Essex.

Mr. Taras Natyshak: Speaker, I believe you'll find that we have unanimous—oh.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Ninety-six students from across the province are participating in the fourth annual Legislative Assembly of Ontario Model Parliament. They're here to watch us. Please join me in welcoming these wonderful young people and possible legislators to the Legislature. Welcome.

Applause.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you.

BOB WHITE

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Essex on a point of order.

Mr. Taras Natyshak: Thank you for your indulgence, Speaker. I believe you'll find that we have unanimous consent for a moment of silence to recognize the recent passing of former national president of the Canadian Auto Workers Union, Bob White.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Essex is seeking unanimous consent for a moment of silence in tribute. Do we agree? Agreed.

Could I ask all people in the gallery to please stand and observe a moment of silence for Mr. White.

The House observed a moment's silence.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you for your kindness.

1040

LEGISLATIVE PAGES

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): At this time, I would like to introduce to you our pages in this session. Could they please assemble? This session is a little shorter, so they will work doubly hard for you.

From Lambton—Kent—Middlesex, Anella Orosz; from Bramalea—Gore—Malton, Annissa Emanuel; from Scarborough Southwest, Azaria Inniss-Zdjelaric; from Dufferin—Caledon, Benjamin Milone; from Mississauga South, Connor Ludwig; from Vaughan, Elizabeth-Anne Campione; from Perth—Wellington, Grace Glosnek; from Algoma—Manitoulin, Hailey McLeod; from Ancaster—Dundas—Flamborough—Westdale, Ismael Alachi; from Oshawa, Jack Ryan; from Mississauga East—Cooksville, Konstantina Tsotos; from Haldimand—Norfolk, Kyra Labonte; from Niagara West—Glanbrook, Luca DiPietro; from Newmarket—Aurora, Maria Francisca Sadono; from Guelph, McGowan Weddig; from Halton, Nicholaus Schalfhauser; from Simcoe—Grey, Nolan Campbell; from Etobicoke North, Prey Patel; from Toronto—Danforth, Quinn LeFort; from Don Valley West, Radin Vahid-Banasaz; from Timiskaming—Cochrane, Rowan Glover; from Kitchener—Waterloo, Sebastian Frayne; and from Elgin—Middlesex—London, Sophie Pellerine.

Applause.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): It is now time for question period.

ORAL QUESTIONS

EXECUTIVE COMPENSATION

Mr. Patrick Brown: My question is for the Premier. The CEO of Hydro-Québec makes \$400,000. The CEO of Hydro One makes \$4 million. My question is straightforward and simple: Why?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: President of the Treasury Board.

Hon. Liz Sandals: Our government froze salaries for the broader public sector executives. Those salaries will remain frozen until people have made—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): There's an opportunity to freeze somebody else out.

Finish, Minister.

Hon. Liz Sandals: Yes, thank you. Those salaries will remain frozen until the organization has submitted a compliant framework. If they don't submit a compliant framework, they will remain frozen. We will send them back to the drawing board.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member for Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke will come to order. As yesterday, I'm prepared to move to warnings quite quickly.

Supplementary question.

Mr. Patrick Brown: Again to the Premier: The government's defence for a \$4-million paycheque is, "It's frozen." You've frozen it at \$4 million? People are struggling with their hydro bills and that's your defence?

Let me try this again—and I hope the Premier will actually defend her own decisions rather than pass the buck. In BC, the CEO of BC Hydro makes \$400,000. In Ontario, you've decided that it's appropriate to pay the CEO of Hydro One \$4 million. So my question, Mr. Speaker, to the Premier is: Will she answer and be responsible for her own decisions? How is this appropriate in Ontario when people can't even pay their hydro bills?

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Be seated, please. Thank you.

Minister?

Hon. Liz Sandals: In order to be compliant with the framework, organizations have to submit a list of realistic comparators, and if they don't have a realistic list, then we'll send them back to the drawing board. They have to only have modest salary increases. If they don't do that, we'll send them back to the drawing board.

Obviously, \$4 million is a very—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you.

Minister.

Hon. Liz Sandals: Obviously, there's already a very generous compensation level there, and we would not be looking to have any further increases.

But I think it is important to remember, when we look at all our executives across the broader public sector, that they have been under—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you. Final supplementary?

Mr. Patrick Brown: Mr. Speaker, again to the Premier—and maybe, for the third time, I can have the Premier answer the question from the leader of the official opposition. That is the normal practice here.

This government has decided to give a \$4-million salary to one of their hydro execs—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): All sides, come to order.

Please put your question.

Mr. Patrick Brown: Mr. Speaker, maybe the Premier does not want to defend the \$4-million salary, so I'll try a different angle. This government has decided to hide the salaries of hydro execs. This year they're not going to be on the sunshine list. This, coming from a government that says they're transparent? We've never seen this level of secrecy.

So my question to the Premier is: Will you make sure we have disclosure of these salaries? Will you promise the Legislature that you will not hide these salaries from the public? Transparency is a good thing.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Be seated, please.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Bring out the sunlight.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Nepean–Carleton will come to order.

I think my next intervention might have to go to warnings.

Minister?

Hon. Liz Sandals: Let's be a little bit clearer here. What the Leader of the Opposition is quoting is the maximum possible compensation. In fact, the base salary that the CEO of Hydro One earns is not \$4 million. So let's stick to the facts.

There are some incentive programs for—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): New question.

EXECUTIVE COMPENSATION

Mr. Patrick Brown: Mr. Speaker, the question is to the Premier. The government's defence is that the base salary doesn't start at \$4 million. But they got paid \$4 million when people can't pay their hydro bills. And it's not just Hydro One. What we have is, we're seeing executive compensation across the board getting out of control. The Liberals were going to allow Ontario Power Generation to more than double the salary of their CEO before they got caught. The Premier backtracked and said, "Come forward with something more reasonable."

Since you won't answer about Hydro One, will you at least answer about OPG? What do you consider, Premier, to be reasonable?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: The President of the Treasury Board has been very clear about the process that has been put in place. The only reason that we're talking about caps on salaries, that we're talking about ranges, is because we've put that policy in place, Mr. Speaker. We have initiated that process because under previous governments there has been no such process; there's been no such transparency.

1050

What we have said is that the increases must be reasonable. The salaries must be reasonable. If they're

not, if the comparators that the organization is using are not fair comparators, then, as the President of the Treasury Board said, they will have to go back to the drawing board. They will have to start again and come forward with a rationale that is—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke, second time. You're edging everyone to the warning stage.

Supplementary?

Mr. Patrick Brown: Again, to the Premier: The Premier said if they're not fair comparators, they'll be sent back to the drawing board. The CEO of Hydro One makes \$4 million. In BC, it's \$400,000. In Quebec, it's \$400,000. This is completely out of whack with comparators.

So the question is—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Minister of Infrastructure, come to order.

Mr. Patrick Brown: Mr. Speaker, to the Premier: Will you have the hydro CEO come back to the drawing board so that we have compensation that's appropriate when people can't pay their hydro bills?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: First of all, let's deal with the facts. As the President of the Treasury Board said, the \$4-million number that the Leader of the Opposition is using is the outside amount. In fact, the CEO of BC Hydro took home \$1 million last year, not \$500,000. So as long as we're dealing with facts, that's a good thing.

Our focus is on reducing electricity prices for people across this province. It is very clear that we have made some changes. The 8% reduction is in place now, but there's more we have to do. Our focus is on finding those ways to take costs out of the system to help people with their electricity bills every day. That's what we're focusing on.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Be seated, please. Be seated, please.

Final supplementary?

Mr. Patrick Brown: The Premier is applauding that's it's only four times the amount the hydro CEO gets paid in BC. The only thing this government is looking at is ways to avoid disclosure. The only thing this government is looking at is hiding these salaries.

I can't get an answer on whether you think it's appropriate or what's reasonable. I can't get an answer from this government on actually allowing these salaries to be disclosed on the sunshine list, so let me try something new. Maybe the Premier will answer this.

It's not just OPG, it's not just hydro, it's Metrolinx. This government decided that it's appropriate to give \$100,000 pay bumps to a group that built a bridge upside down. You're actually giving pay bumps to individuals who aren't even doing their job competently.

My question to the Premier is, can we have a commitment that we're actually going to rein in these executive

salaries that are completely out of whack with the rest of the country, yes or no?

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Be seated, please. Be seated. Thank you. Start the clock.

Premier?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I know this is an issue that is of concern to people. I had a conversation with a gentleman yesterday. We were talking about electricity prices and he raised the issue of CEO salaries. I talked to him about the reality that we are putting caps on and that we are working with organizations to make sure that there are comparators that are reasonable.

But the reality is, as I said, the CEO of BC Hydro took home \$1 million last year; that is my understanding. So there is a range of salary for highly qualified people, who we need. We need highly qualified people to run these organizations, whether it's Metrolinx, which is overseeing the largest transit investment in more than a generation, or whether it's our electricity system. We need those people in place. At the same time, we are focusing on helping people with their electricity bills.

ENERGY POLICIES

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My question is for the Premier. The Premier told Ontarians that she was planning to get a deal with every local hydro utility so she wouldn't need legislation to stop winter disconnections. This morning, she introduced legislation, which means she couldn't get the deal. So which companies said no to the Premier?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Mr. Speaker, the bottom line is that there will be—there's a law that has been passed, a bill that's been passed in this Legislature, which will mean that all distribution companies across the province will have to reconnect or cease disconnections. So that's the reality. I actually don't know which LDCs were not in a position, by midnight last night, to make that decision. But they will all now have to comply.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Yesterday the Premier told Ontarians that she would get a deal with local hydro utilities so she wouldn't need legislation to stop people from having their power cut off. Today, her minister said that the Premier couldn't get a deal because the utilities couldn't stop cutting people off "in a timely manner." It looks to me—it looks to people, it looks to everyone—like the Premier is passing a bill her minister says can't be enforced. Is this more about good-news Liberal press releases than it is about stopping people from having their hydro cut off?

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Stop the clock. The Minister of Indigenous Relations will come to order.

Premier?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I'm trying to follow the logic of the leader of the third party. But I think what she's saying is that even though there is a bill that has

been passed and our expectation is that we will have royal assent today—even though that will be in place, I think what she's saying is that there are local distribution companies that won't comply. That is a ridiculous assertion. I have every expectation that every distribution company in the province will comply with a law that is in place. If the leader of the third party has information to the contrary, I think she should share it with this House.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Be seated, please.

Final supplementary, please?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Just ask her energy minister, Speaker. It was he that said that the companies said that they couldn't make this happen in a timely manner. So she just needs to ask her own minister to get the answer to that question.

But look, here's Liberal logic: Last year, 60,000 people had their power cut off. Last year, it didn't matter to the Premier that kids went to bed cold or seniors were in the dark. The difference is that now the Premier seems to be in political trouble and there's an election looming. Can the Premier explain to people why this wasn't a problem until it became a political problem for the Liberal Party and this Premier of Ontario?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I just do not accept the premise of the question. The fact is that I and my government care deeply about what people are dealing with every day in their lives. I care deeply about families who are struggling with costs. We started to try to lower electricity costs more than a year ago. We understand that there are challenges that people are dealing with.

As far as the disconnections go, we have moved. We brought legislation in in June. We had hoped that it would be passed earlier. It has now been passed and all local distribution companies across the province will have to comply. That's the bottom line. That's what's important to people across the province.

HYDRO RATES

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My next question is for the Premier. Yesterday, the Premier said, "We're confronting the reality that people have across the board seen unacceptable increases" on their hydro bills. If it's unacceptable today, why has the Premier caused this unaffordable hydro crisis in Ontario's hydro system?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Mr. Speaker, I'm really happy to talk about what has happened over the last number of years to improve the electricity system in Ontario. When we came into office under the previous Premier in 2003, we inherited a system that was degraded—

Interjections.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: This, actually, is less of a partisan comment than the heckling from the opposition would suggest, because government after government, of different party stripes, had not made the necessary investments in our electricity system. They had kept dirty

coal running, had not invested in transmission lines, and had not invested in new, clean, renewable energy.

1100

As I said, that is not a partisan comment; that is something that was a reality. We inherited a system that was sorely in need of investment. We have made billions of dollars of investment, and we are now seeing the impact of that. People across the province have had a steep increase in electricity prices, and that's why we've been working to take those costs out of the system.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: What this Premier and her government have done is to systematically break our electricity system in the province of Ontario. That's what they have done.

Yesterday, the Premier said that hydro rates were unacceptable, but she accepted it when she signed off on the decision to cancel the gas plants—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Come to order.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: She accepted it when she signed off on the decision to cancel the gas plants, she accepted it when she decided to privatize Hydro One, and she accepted it when she watched as the cost of electricity has risen by 280% in the province of Ontario. This is a Premier who just doesn't get it, and hasn't been getting it for far, far too long.

If the Premier thinks hydro bills are too high, if they're unacceptable, why has she been causing them to go up for 14 years?

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Be seated, please.

Premier?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Mr. Speaker, let's be perfectly clear that what the leader of the third party is saying, first of all, is that she would not have made the investments that we made in this province. She would not have jump-started a renewable industry in this province. She would not have shut down the coal-fired plants. She would not have invested in tens of thousands of kilometres of line. She would not have built new generation in this province.

She would not have made those investments, and today, what she would do is that she would cancel the broadening of the ownership of Hydro One, which would not take one cent off an electricity bill in this province. That is the solution that the leader of the third party is putting forward, a solution that would not take one cent off one electricity bill.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Be seated, please. Final supplementary.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Speaker, I don't think it's acceptable that in a province like Ontario, people have to choose between paying their rent or having their power cut off. It is not acceptable now; it wasn't acceptable last year or the year before that.

Families are at a crisis point all across this province. For people who have to choose between child care or

hydro, paying their rent or their hydro bill, filling a prescription or paying for hydro, what does this Premier expect people to do?

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Be seated, please. Thank you.

Premier?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Mr. Speaker, on this we can agree: It is unacceptable, and that is exactly why we started last year making changes. The 8% reduction, I understand, is not enough. It is something, but it is not enough, and that is why we are working—the Minister of Energy is working day and night, literally, with his officials to find ways to reduce the costs.

But to suggest that those investments in the electricity system to make it clean, to make it renewable, to make it one of the leading clean grids in North America—to suggest that that was not a reasonable investment? To connect people in the north, to make sure that we had a reliable grid—to suggest that that was not a good investment? I think that's irresponsible. That would have been an irresponsible path to take.

We need to lower people's electricity prices. We are working to find more ways to do that. But we have a reliable, clean grid in Ontario, and that's a good thing for the people of the province.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Be seated, please. New question.

GOVERNMENT SPENDING

Mr. Steve Clark: My question is for the Premier. Speaker, I want to congratulate the Premier on the award she received today: the lifetime achievement award from the Canadian Taxpayers Federation for the government's mishandling of energy policy. It's called the CTF Teddy Government Waste Award.

Congrats on your Teddy, Premier. Would you like to offer an acceptance speech?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I would have thought the 8% reduction on electricity bills would be something that the Canadian Taxpayers Federation would have agreed with. I would have thought that the Canadian Taxpayers Federation would have thought that was a great idea. Free tuition for young people who are going to college or university or who are trying to get their way back into the system, I would have thought that the Canadian Taxpayers Federation would have thought that was a good idea.

The fact that—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Just inches away from warnings. The member from Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound, come to order.

Please finish.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: The fact that we have one of the most competitive tax regimes in North America, I would have thought the Canadian Taxpayers Federation

would have thought that was a good idea. I look forward to the Canadian Taxpayers Federation having those conversations with me.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Be seated, please. Thank you.

Supplementary?

Mr. Steve Clark: Again, back to the Premier: Another award. It's a banner day for Ontario. Ten provinces; one winner: That was Ontario, which won the Teddy award for provincial waste.

This one is for Ontario's Electric Vehicle Incentive Program that provides \$14,000 cheques to those who buy vehicles that cost \$100,000. Will the Premier take the stage, accept her award and acknowledge the waste?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Finance.

Hon. Charles Sousa: I appreciate the member opposite recognizing what's happening in Ontario. He failed to talk about the fact that we're coming to balance, our economy is growing and we're outpacing the G7 countries. The Conference Board of Canada has cited that Ontario leads all of Canada in that growth and, as a result, our revenues are up. As a result of economic growth, jobs are up—700,000 net new jobs, as I said, since the recession, and our deficit is the lowest it has ever been since the recession at \$1.9 billion as of third quarter.

Going forward, we're doing everything possible to ensure that we balance the budget and ensure that we continue to invest and make everyday life easier for Ontarians by ensuring that we can afford even more support systems, including mitigating electricity rates.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Be seated, please. Start the clock, please.

New question?

HYDRO RATES

Ms. Jennifer K. French: My question is to the Premier. Families in my community are fed up with paying for this government's mistakes on their hydro bills. Last week I heard from Matt, who got a \$50 hydro bill for a yet-to-be-completed basement apartment.

Now, \$50 might not sound so bad, but when you look at the bill and realize that the electricity used was 000.000 kilowatt hours and the \$50 charge was for the delivery of literally nothing, I would ask: Does 50 bucks for nothing seem like a fair deal to the Premier?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Energy.

Hon. Glenn Thibeault: I'm very pleased to stand and answer this question because what we're talking about is distribution. Actually, when you look at distribution, it comes from generating plants on the wires and then into the LDC and then to that home. We're working hard right now on making sure that that's equitable across the province.

As the Premier has often said, we need to ensure that we find ways to lower rates for everyone, and that's one

of the things that we're doing. But we will make no apologies—we will make no apologies—for investing in a system that actually—

Ms. Catherine Fife: You should be apologizing.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Kitchener-Waterloo will come to order.

Finish, please.

Hon. Glenn Thibeault: We'll make no apologies for investing in a system that was actually a mess, that needed repair and that actually needed to be greened. Now we are saving \$4.3 billion in our health care system because air pollution deaths are down 23% and 41% in hospitalizations. We invested in our system and we're proud of that.

1110

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary.

Ms. Jennifer K. French: I'm sure that Matt appreciates that wonderful explanation.

But again to the Premier: Matt paid \$50 to have nothing delivered—nothing. That's like giving the UPS guy 50 bucks to send an empty box. Fortunately, this bill won't break the bank for Matt, but it might for others. The only relief that he saw with your paltry provincial rebate was two whole dollars and 41 cents.

Speaker, is the Premier so out of touch that she thinks this is okay?

Hon. Glenn Thibeault: It sounds like the NDP wants us to go back to coal as well. They want cheap electricity. Rather than invest in a system that's renewable and green, they want cheap electricity. That's kind of appalling, knowing the investments that we've made.

We recognize that we need to ensure that we find ways to actually help people who are having a hard time with their bills, because we understand that the investments that we've made are costing others more.

Interjections: Bring Bob back.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): My request is to bring civility back.

Minister, wrap up, please.

Hon. Glenn Thibeault: We're going to continue to invest in finding ways to lower rates for all Ontarians. We're going to continue to do that on top of the 8% and the \$60 reduction we've seen through the RRRP.

ANTI-RACISM ACTIVITIES

M. Shafiq Qaadri: Ma question est pour le ministre responsable de la Direction générale de l'action contre le racisme, the Honourable Michael Coteau.

I believe that Ontario is still a place that honours and celebrates diversity, pluralism and inclusivity, welcoming people from all walks of life. For decades, generation upon generation of families worldwide have been welcomed here and now call Ontario home.

However in this tide of growing xenophobia, which includes, unfortunately, rendering 17 children fatherless in Quebec City, there are fears that immigrants may not be welcomed into Ontario. Multiculturalism and open-

heartedness are our strengths, and we must continue to be accepting and progressive.

Minister, what are we doing to uphold our commitment to openness, acceptance and inclusivity?

Hon. Michael Coteau: I want to thank the member from Etobicoke North for his question. I think this is an important question, and I want to thank him for the advocacy he does in his community in regard to this issue.

Ontario is a welcoming province built on the principles of openness and fairness. I think now more than ever we need to ensure that the rights of people in this province are respected. Across government, we work to ensure that our policies live up to the ideals of openness and fairness.

A year ago, the Premier of this province established the Anti-Racism Directorate to continue to build on the inclusiveness within our province by addressing and preventing systemic racism.

I've had the opportunity to visit 10 communities across this province and meet with thousands of people. I heard first-hand about the painful realities that racism plays here in the province of Ontario. These public meetings provided input for us to build a strategic plan to stop systemic racism here in the province of Ontario. I'm quite proud to report that we'll be able to release—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you. Supplementary.

Mr. Shafiq Qaadri: Thank you, Minister Coteau. Not only do I appreciate your personal commitment but also the personal stories that you and I have shared in our corridor consultations.

It's been more than inspiring to see, under Premier Wynne's leadership, Ontario continue to be a province that welcomes so many newcomers, immigrants and refugees. From a purely economic point of view, immigration into our province builds Ontario up. Immigrants have contributed greatly to our richness, tapestry, culture and prosperity of our communities.

Amongst the many diverse groups in Ontario, Speaker, you will know that there are over 600,000 Muslims. Our province has been a welcoming place for many Muslims, but we must admit, unfortunately, that Islamophobia is still a reality. Just last Friday, not too far from this Legislature, we saw a protest outside of a mosque with hateful, demeaning and regressive signs. It's unbelievable to me to witness such things in Toronto in 2017.

Minister, how is our government responding to these acts of racism and intolerance?

Hon. Michael Coteau: Again, I want to thank the member from Etobicoke North for the question. I also want to take this opportunity to thank the member from Ottawa–Vanier, because I know she'll be bringing forward a motion this Thursday in regard to Islamophobia. Thank you for your leadership on this file.

I want to make it clear that, as the minister responsible for anti-racism here in the province of Ontario, we will not tolerate any form of racism here in the province of

Ontario. I want the Muslim community in Ontario to know that we have their back and we believe that they should be able to live in a province where they feel free, where they feel respected and where racism should not exist.

We're going to come forward with a plan here in Ontario to work on anti-racism policies and processes, and we'll bring forward a plan in regard to Islamophobia. We want to make sure that we stop its devastating effect here in the province of Ontario.

Again, I just want the community to know that we're here to support them, and I hope that all members in this Legislature are here to do just that.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Be seated, please.

Thank you.

New question.

ENERGY POLICIES

Mr. Todd Smith: My question is for the Premier this morning. Speaker, another mind-numbing example of Liberal mismanagement on the energy file: Yesterday, we learned that Windstream Energy would like the government to pay the \$28 million the NAFTA court said that they were owed after the government cancelled their offshore wind project.

My question to the Premier is, has the federal government asked your government for the money to pay Windstream?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Energy.

Hon. Glenn Thibeault: We have been working with our federal counterparts to ensure that we rectify this payment. We're continuing to work with our federal counterparts, and we hope to have that done in very short order.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary.

Mr. Todd Smith: I think the thing that everybody wants to know is, how much more is this going to cost the ratepayers and the people of Ontario?

The Premier has two options on this file. The Premier is either going to pay Windstream or she's hoping that the electricity crisis that her government has created will blow over—I don't see that happening—and then she can announce that the government is actually going to go ahead and build this \$5.2-billion project with Windstream. Either way, Ontario families are on the hook for millions or billions of dollars.

Is the Premier going to make them pay now for this project, or are they just going to make Ontarians pay for the next 20 or 30 years for this project?

Hon. Glenn Thibeault: Once again, I think I answered that question earlier. We're working with our federal counterparts on that. But based off of Windstream's and the offshore wind turbines, we're relying on the science coming from our colleagues in MOECC.

But the one thing that I find very interesting is, from a party that has no plan on how to deal with the energy crisis, the only thing that they can offer is ripping up

contracts, which would actually cost us billions of dollars more in litigation. I find it a little ironic that they're saying one thing from one side and then another thing.

LABOUR DISPUTE

Miss Monique Taylor: My question is to the Minister of Children and Youth Services. On December 23, two days before Christmas, the management at Nipissing and Parry Sound Children's Aid Society locked out their workers. Those workers are still locked out. For the past eight weeks, vulnerable children and families have been at an increased risk in their absence.

This is becoming a pattern, Minister. The lack of funding for child protection, coupled with the CAS management digging in its heels, is putting children at risk. Will the minister act to get a resolution to this situation and ensure that children and families get the services they need?

Hon. Michael Coteau: I would like to thank the member for the question. I want to start off by saying that the safety of children, youth and families here in the province of Ontario is something we are always concerned with—in fact, all the members in this Legislature are concerned with. I had the opportunity to meet with the men and women from the Nipissing and Parry Sound CAS earlier today and to listen to some of their concerns. I just want to say thank you for the work you do, because you're the men and women who are making a huge difference for families here in the province of Ontario.

1120

This government has always been committed to making sure that young people in the province of Ontario are set up for success. In fact, earlier today, I spent almost 40 minutes speaking about our new piece of legislation for child protection here in the province of Ontario. I do believe that it's something that we believe is necessary for change, and it's something that I believe is going to help position the sector for more success in the future.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Miss Monique Taylor: The minister is right: When he spoke to Bill 89 this morning, he recognized the responsibility that he has to vulnerable children. But he can't look the other way when those children are not getting the services that they need. There are reports that a ministry audit has shown mismanagement of funds at this society. If this is the case, children and families should not be paying the price for that, and neither should these workers.

What does the minister plan to do to ensure that these workers get back to the work that we need them to do and, more importantly, that vulnerable families and children need you to do?

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Be seated, please. Thank you.

Minister?

Hon. Michael Coteau: If you go back a few months ago, the member opposite probably asked the exact same question when it came to Peel Children's Aid. The question was for me to do something and to intervene. We allowed a process to take place and they found a solution. The member opposite knows that there are processes in place, and every single time we have a labour disruption here in the province of Ontario you don't want a minister or anyone from government intervening. I believe in the process. I've listened to the folks from Nipissing and Parry Sound and I have—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Finish, please.

Hon. Michael Coteau: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'll work with the Ministry of Labour and our ministry in the event that we believe there's no runway left to actually have them come to their own solutions. But until that point, we have to let the process take place.

HUMAN TRAFFICKING

Mr. Granville Anderson: My question is to the Minister of the Status of Women. Many Ontarians and members of this House recognize the traumatic and painful ordeal human trafficking inflicts upon many women and girls across this province. Human trafficking is a heinous and deplorable crime that robs the safety and livelihood and dignity of those who are being exploited and abused.

Last year, I was extremely pleased to hear our government was taking action to invest up to \$72 million in an Ontario-made human trafficking strategy. Our government has also appointed Jennifer Richardson to be the director for the new provincial Anti-Human Trafficking Coordination Office. The director was recently in my riding of Durham to consult with front-line service providers. I understand that this was a productive meeting, and many of my constituents are eager to hear what work is on the way.

Can the minister please provide the House with an update on the strategy to end human trafficking?

Hon. Indira Naidoo-Harris: I would like to thank the MPP from Durham for this very important question. I would also like to thank the member for his great work in his community.

Speaker, as you know, human trafficking is a deplorable and inhumane crime. Human traffickers prey on the most vulnerable in our society and survivors often experience serious and long-term trauma. But, Speaker, I want you to know that work is under way across government to protect Ontarians from this brutal crime. As part of our strategy to end human trafficking, the director of the anti-trafficking office has consulted extensively with anti-trafficking coalitions to find solutions. The director is also working with survivors to develop a community-based supports fund. In addition, we have increased funding by \$6.6 million to 47 community-based service partners delivering supports to survivors. We have also expanded the Victim Quick Response Program by \$1.9

million to allow victims of human trafficking to access benefits. These are just some of the key initiatives under way to get rid of this terrible crime.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary.

Mr. Granville Anderson: I would like to thank the Minister of the Status of Women for her answer. I think many people in my riding, as well as across this province, would agree that if a survivor needs support, we deserve to be there for them as one community. I am pleased that our government's strategy included the launch of a community-based supports fund and an indigenous-led initiatives fund to expand and improve access to services for survivors.

It is also great to hear that our strategy also includes more investments and partnership with our law enforcement partners. But our government heard that we need to do better. We need to make sure survivors can feel safe and protected. Can the minister tell us about our government's proposed legislation to tackle human trafficking in this province?

Hon. Indira Naidoo-Harris: Attorney General.

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: I want to thank the member from Durham for the question. I also want to thank our front-line support workers, our law enforcement partners, our partner ministries like the Ontario Women's Directorate, the Ministry of Community and Social Services and the Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services. I would also like to commend the member for Haliburton-Kawartha Lakes-Brock for her advocacy on this very important issue.

Our government is working hard to create a province where all Ontarians can live in safety, free from the threat, fear or experience of exploitation and violence. That is why today our government will introduce legislation to combat this crime. If passed, this bill will allow survivors to apply for restraining orders against human traffickers, will make it easier for survivors of human trafficking to get compensation from those who trafficked them, and also proclaim February 22 of each year as Human Trafficking Awareness Day.

Speaker, I hope that all members will support this legislation because it will ensure that all victims of traffickers have a way to move forward and build a better life.

CHILD PROTECTION

Mr. Norm Miller: My question is to the Minister of Children and Youth Services. Today at Queen's Park, we are joined by representatives from Nipissing and Parry Sound children's aid societies, who provide essential local services. They've travelled all the way here to Queen's Park to have their voices heard. There are 48 of them here today. They've been locked out since mid-December. I met with the workers this morning, and they have serious concerns that the mandate to protect children is not being fulfilled.

Would the minister explain to this House what the government is doing to support these workers and to get

better outcomes for those who are in dire need of their services?

Hon. Michael Coteau: I'm happy to take this question. As the member mentioned, I realize that the CAS workers travelled quite early—left their homes at 4:30 in the morning to be here today. Again, I want to thank them for being here to talk to not only myself but other members in the Legislature.

The member opposite knows, and all of the members know on the Conservative side in the Legislature, that there's a process for negotiation. You stand here today and you say, "Minister, what are you doing? Are you going to intervene?" On the other side, you say to respect the collective bargaining process. We know there's a process in place that works in Ontario, and we know that, overall, when it comes to the process and having the bargaining units reach a potential solution, we have massive success here in the province of Ontario.

I said that I committed that we will work to ensure that, at the end of the day, the process is respected and that we work to put in the supports necessary to make that process move along.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Nipissing, supplementary.

Mr. Victor Fedeli: Thank you and good morning, Speaker. Back to the Minister of Children and Youth Services. For years, many organizations and stakeholders have pointed to the ongoing serious issues within the child welfare system. In fact, the Auditor General has detailed the problems with this ministry's accountability in three separate audits over the last decade. She has expressed grave concerns over and over and over. For too long, there have been serious deficiencies in the system, which have let our most vulnerable slip through the cracks—and, in some cases, they have died.

Speaker, I ask the minister: Why does it always take the Auditor General, the Financial Accountability Officer or an OPP investigation to get to the facts in Ontario?

1130

Hon. Michael Coteau: Mr. Speaker, if we look at the child protection sector here in the province of Ontario, we know we have fewer children in care today than we had several years ago. We have more young people being adopted here in the province of Ontario, and the member opposite knows that we have the most substantial, most progressive changes since 1985 coming forward through this Legislature.

In fact, I introduced second reading this morning—with some massive changes in child protection. The member opposite knows that we're raising the age of protection here in the province to 18, which aligns with other provinces and ensures that 1,600 more young people are brought into protection.

We're making sure, Mr. Speaker, when we talk about young people in care, that we're putting in culturally sensitive programs to ensure that their culture and their identity are respected through the process. We're working with indigenous communities throughout Ontario to ensure that customary care and other processes are put in

place so they have more say in where their children end up—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you. New question.

ENERGY POLICIES

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My question is for the Premier. The spokesperson of the Sault Ste. Marie electricity utility—the public utility—doesn't want to see families' electricity cut off. He says the solution is to bring down the actual cost of electricity.

Is the Premier going to do what's right for families in the Sault, as well as families across Ontario, and start to actually address the cost of electricity so people can start to afford their electricity bills?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Energy.

Hon. Glenn Thibeault: I'm pleased to rise on this question. Of course, Mr. Speaker, we've already brought forward the 8% reduction that is actually helping every family in Sault Ste. Marie. For those who are in and outside of Sault Ste. Marie on Hydro One, as an R2 customer within those regions, they're seeing a \$60 reduction on their bill.

You know what else the folks from Sault Ste. Marie are seeing? A clean grid, and one that they can rely on—one that was in a mess back in 2003. We've invested billions and billions of dollars to make sure that families, like in Sault Ste. Marie, in Sudbury and northern Ontario, have access to an electricity grid that is reliable and clean. That's something that we have done as this government: invested in the electricity system to make sure that it's clean and reliable.

We're going to take it to the next level now and make it as affordable as we can for all families and businesses right across the province.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Giordan Zin, the spokesperson at the Sault PUC, was pretty clear: "If you want to solve this problem, the solution is in controlling the commodity price of electricity." The Premier knows as well as I do that private contracts lock Ontarians into paying private profits for years, but we can actually direct public companies to charge less. It's why power is a powerful tool that benefits families, businesses and the province as a whole.

When the spokesperson of Sault Ste. Marie PUC is telling the government it needs to reduce the cost of electricity, the question is, is the Premier actually listening?

Hon. Glenn Thibeault: This Premier has been listening for years. We've actually renegotiated the Samsung agreement, saving \$3.7 billion; reduced FIT prices by \$1.9 billion; created a competitive LRP process, saving \$1.5 billion; and suspended the LRP2 project, \$3.8 billion. We've been investing in making sure that we find ways to have downward pressure on rates while building the system up for a decade.

One thing we should also talk about: When it comes to Sault Ste. Marie, this government has been listening. For example, ongoing provincial support for the city of Sault Ste. Marie will be more than \$30 million in 2017. That's in the neighbourhood of about \$1,200 of provincial support per residential taxpayer. Timmins, for example: \$18 million.

This government gets it, Mr. Speaker. We're listening and we're acting.

WATER EXTRACTION

Mr. John Fraser: My question is for the Minister of the Environment and Climate Change. I know that ensuring Ontario's water resources are protected and in good health is a priority for you. I know that, like myself, many of us in this Legislature heard from people in our communities with concerns over permits to take water. I know you acted to address some of these concerns in a two-year moratorium that places a freeze on new and expanded water-taking permits.

Mr. Speaker, can the minister please explain to the House what this moratorium will achieve?

Hon. Glen R. Murray: I want to thank the Premier for her leadership on this. Her direction was that we look at a way to start protecting our water supplies. As you know, the area around Guelph and Kitchener-Waterloo is one of the high-stress water areas in Ontario. We know that because we just completed, in the last year, all 22 source water protection plans developed and being managed by local communities for the first time in Ontario's history. So that water is now protected. The moratorium puts a stop on expansion of those water facilities and allows us to take the next steps within the international trade rules to protect water sources further and to secure and protect the jobs in the sector as well.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. John Fraser: Again, my question is for the Minister of the Environment and Climate Change. Engaging our communities and providing our communities with the opportunity to voice their ideas and concerns is an important part of protecting our water. As we move forward in our effort to protect vital resources, we will need to continue to engage the communities most impacted by groundwater taking.

Minister, I understand that the government is considering implementing a new fee on permits to take water. Speaker, through you, can the minister provide the House with details on the new measure and how it will further support our efforts in groundwater protection?

Hon. Glen R. Murray: We will be doing two things. One, we're moving to raise the fee which was—to say "low" would be an understatement; it was \$3.71 per 100 litres, Mr. Speaker. That's raised now to \$500, the highest water-taking fee in Canada, which we think is a strong step forward to promote conservation.

The House has also passed Bill 151, which deals with the issue of plastic waste and the microplastics that are in our lakes and rivers. Many people don't realize that

taking 500 millilitres of water from the tap is much more energy-efficient. It takes 2,000 times as much water to take that same amount of water out of a plastic bottle. As my friend David Crombie used to say, everything is connected to everything else. We're taking strong action on water protection. We're also taking issue on packaging. We're seeing a major cleanup of the environment and reduction in water use.

HYDRO RATES

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff: Speaker, my question is to the Premier. In December, I had the opportunity to tour Stanpac in Smithville. Originally founded in 1949 in Burlington, when Steve Witt bought the manufacturing company in 1971, it had only two employees. With hard work and innovation, Witt built the business up, and today Stanpac employs over 300 people in Smithville. They provide good, well-paying jobs, but Stanpac also runs a plant in Texas with close to 200 employees in that state.

When I toured their plant in Niagara West–Glanbrook, I was told that it cost them \$1 million in Ontario for hydro and that it would cost them only \$400,000 in Texas. That's a 150% increase in hydro costs.

My question is to the Premier. Why does her government insist on doing everything it can to kill manufacturing jobs here in Ontario?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Economic Development and Growth.

Hon. Brad Duguid: I think the real question is, is Ontario competitive with the United States and the rest of the world? And the answer is, unequivocally, yes we are. In fact, we're not only competing with, we're outcompeting the US. We're outcompeting the UK. We're outcompeting Germany. We're outcompeting Japan. We're outcompeting Italy. We're outcompeting all of the G7 nations because we're leading them in growth. We're up 700,000—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): It's absolutely never too late to be warned.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Oh, it's an excellent point.

Minister?

Hon. Brad Duguid: Mr. Speaker, we've worked in partnership with companies like Stanpac to make investments that that side of the House said we shouldn't make. In fact, you look at the manufacturing sector, you look at the \$2 billion we've seen in auto invested in this province—if they had their way, we wouldn't even have an auto sector in this province.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary? The member from Dufferin–Caledon.

Ms. Sylvia Jones: Back to the Premier: In December, my office opened 20 files to help people pay their hydro bills. People are angry that they're paying delivery charges that are greater than the cost of their electricity,

people like Mrs. Greenley, who have to choose between putting food on the table or keeping the lights on, or the senior who wants the Premier to explain how \$108 in electricity is costing her \$252. People in Dufferin–Caledon are angry and they want answers. When will you finally act to make hydro affordable for my constituents?

Hon. Brad Duguid: Minister of Energy, Mr. Speaker. 1140

Hon. Glenn Thibeault: I'd like to thank the member for bringing up those situations, because they are one of the reasons why the Premier has tasked me, since I had took over this portfolio in June, with finding ways to lower the electricity bills for all people in this province. We did the 8% come January 1, and there is the RRRP. We also have the Ontario Electricity Support Program in place to help seniors like the honourable member mentioned.

We do recognize that that isn't enough, because we did have to clean up a system that was a mess, that relied on dirty coal, that was in shambles. We said, "Enough of that," and we built a system that we can now rely on and that is clean. But we recognize that that is actually getting to be unaffordable for some, and that's why we're acting.

We have a plan. We're working on the fine details. We'll be bringing forward that plan to help all Ontarians in the very near future.

HEALTH CARE FUNDING

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: My question is to the Premier. When people need health care, they should be able to get it. But my constituent Kyle Mackay was shocked to learn that his stepson's eye surgery will not be covered by OHIP until he goes blind.

This government has been studying keratoconus surgery since 2011. Pilot funding was provided in 2012, but now, in 2017, when people need surgery to stop their eye disease and restore their vision, it's still not covered by OHIP until they go blind.

What does the Premier say to Kyle, his stepson and every Ontarian who is being forced to go blind or to pay thousands of dollars for eye surgery that they need?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Health and Long-Term Care.

Hon. Eric Hoskins: I appreciate the question. Frankly, I'm looking forward to the opportunity to speak with the member opposite to have a better understanding of this individual's case. I'm not familiar with it, although, of course, I'm familiar with the condition.

It's absolutely a priority of this government that we invest in those procedures, processes and interventions that, in many cases, are critically important to Ontarians and follow evidence-based decision-making by the best experts in the field. We don't take those decisions as a government; we make sure that we allow our experts, our clinicians, our researchers and our academics to make those decisions on our behalf as front-line physicians.

But with regard to eye surgery specifically, I know that we have dramatically increased our funding through

a pilot project, which may be in reference to this case—I'm not sure—through the Kensington eye clinic, which has made this procedure available to numerous, countless, dozens more individuals who will benefit from it.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: The problem is that this surgery is out there. Keratoconus is a surgery that is proven and actually prevents blindness. I'm really concerned, because the constituent is wondering why his son has to worry, go through this stress and hardship and wait until he's blind before OHIP will actually perform the surgery.

This is preventive surgery. There has been a pilot project studying the surgery, and it's shown that it actually helps. People need to make sure that we have health care that prevents blindness, and not wait until they're blind before the surgery will be covered.

When will this government take this seriously and fully fund this kind of surgery in order to prevent blindness, rather than waiting for when they go blind for it to be covered?

Hon. Eric Hoskins: Again, I know the member opposite hasn't brought this case to my attention. I look forward to having the opportunity because that's how I can really intervene and make a difference, if there is an issue, a challenging one—and I can't imagine how challenging this would be for the family.

If in fact she's referring to the pilot project that has been under way for the last several years through Kensington for eye surgery, where we've tripled the funding during a pilot phase, which actually was created specifically so we could know that answer—if it is evidence-based, if it does have a positive impact—we received the report from that pilot study last fall. I expect that the ministry, along with Health Quality Ontario, our clinicians and others, are going to be able to provide us with the best advice. But until that pilot project, which we funded and tripled the funding for, making it much more widely available—until that is completed, we don't know the evidence that she's looking for.

ANTI-BULLYING INITIATIVES

Ms. Ann Hoggarth: My question is for the Minister of Education. Minister, as you know, today is Pink Shirt Day. Pink Shirt Day began in Nova Scotia when a grade 9 boy wore a pink shirt to school. He was bullied by schoolmates for looking gay. It is a staggering fact that almost three quarters of kids report hearing homosexual slurs at schools every day.

Minister, bullying in our schools and in our society is a real problem, with devastating results. As a teacher, I can testify to how debilitating bullying can be to students, sometimes resulting in deadly consequences. This must stop.

I know this an issue that all members of this House feel strongly about, and I'm proud to be a member of this House as we work to stand up to bullies.

Minister, can you please tell the House what the government is doing to combat bullying in schools?

Hon. Mitzie Hunter: I want to thank the member from Barrie for this important question and for her voice on this issue.

Mr. Speaker, two high school students, David Shepherd and Travis Price, did not stand by when they saw a grade 9 student who was being bullied for wearing a pink shirt. They went out, they bought pink shirts too, and they stood with their colleague.

I am very proud to be a member of this Legislature and, Premier, for your leadership and your vision on inclusive and equitable education. Our government has introduced revised legislation on the health and physical education curriculum. We have policies, processes and procedures in place in schools to ensure that our schools remain safe, inclusive and welcoming environments for all students.

I'm proud to see so many members of this Legislature today wearing their pink shirts, standing with our students.

If kids need help, Kids Help Phone is there 24 hours a day, seven days a week, with a hotline that they can call.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Algoma-Manitoulin on a point of order.

M. Michael Mantha: J'aimerais corriger mon record. Tantôt, j'ai introduit un étudiant du Parlement modèle. Je voudrais le réintroduire : Frederic Diebel, qui est ici, un participant au Parlement jeunesse de l'École secondaire catholique Franco-Ouest d'Espanola.

NOTICE OF DISSATISFACTION

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Pursuant to standing order 38(a), the member from Prince Edward-Hastings has given notice of his dissatisfaction with the answer to his question given by the Minister of Energy concerning the Windstream lawsuit. This matter will be debated today at 6 p.m.

There are no deferred votes. This House stands recessed until 3 p.m. this afternoon.

The House recessed from 1148 to 1500.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Mr. James J. Bradley: Speaker, your prerogative is to introduce former members of the Legislature, but sitting with the former member of the Legislature, in the opposition members' gallery, are three students from the University of Toronto who have an interest in the field of politics. They are meeting with a representative of each of the parties under the guidance of a former member and former Speaker of this House, whom you will be introducing.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): That's very wisely done.

The Minister of Community and Social Services.

Hon. Helena Jaczek: In the east members' gallery, we have visiting Tessa Mcfadzean from Good Shepherd Women's Services; Cindy Stover from Sexual Assault and Violence Intervention Services of Halton; Larry Shanks from SafeHope Home; and Varka Kalaydzhieva from the FCJ Refugee Centre.

Hon. Indira Naidoo-Harris: Joining us today in the east members' gallery this afternoon are Barb Gosse of the Canadian Centre to End Human Trafficking; Ashley Franssen Tingley of the Canadian Centre to End Human Trafficking; Corie Langdon, human trafficking crown; Terry Copenace, the Ontario Native Women's Association; Larry Shanks, executive director, SafeHope Home; Sergeant Nunzio Tramontozzi, Toronto Police Services; Inspector Pauline Gray, Toronto Police Services; Tessa Mcfadzean, Good Shepherd Women' Services; Cindy Stover, Sexual Assault and Violence Intervention Services of Halton; Inspector Lisa Taylor, Ontario Provincial Police; and Varka Kalaydzhieva. Please join me in welcoming them all to Queen's Park.

Ms. Peggy Sattler: I would like to welcome three students who have joined us today from the University of Toronto: Joshua Joachimpillai, Carolane Alexandre and Aisha Lone.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Welcome, and thank you.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Oh, I know you're not going to step on this.

As I was taking the wisdom from the dean of the House, he was nice enough to allow me to do an introduction, which is my prerogative and privilege to do when we have former members here. In the 31st, 33rd, 34th and 35th Parliaments from Scarborough—Ellesmere, and the Speaker in the 35th House, David Warner is here.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

HYDRO RATES

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: It's my pleasure to rise here in the Assembly today to talk about hydro and to talk about Hydro Ottawa in particular.

This past fall, my colleague from Ottawa city council Osgoode Ward, George Darouze, collected thousands of signatures asking for this Liberal government to take the lead on ensuring that Hydro Ottawa would assume Hydro One customers inside the city of Ottawa. Unfortunately, we received a response from the minister that he's not prepared to do that.

But Mr. Darouze and I have been continually talking about this initiative, and tomorrow we will be working together in North Gower with Councillor Scott Moffat on the high hydro prices that our constituents pay. That will take place Thursday, February 23, at the North Gower community centre, which is called the Alfred Taylor centre, 2300 Community Way, North Gower. We will have energy expert Parker Gallant there, the Manotick

BIA and, of course, Wind Concerns Ontario will also be in attendance.

Interjections.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: The members opposite may want to try and shut me down, and they might want to heckle me, but I'll always stand up on behalf of the people from Nepean—Carleton and the high hydro rates they are forced to pay because of that Liberal government.

BOB WHITE

Mr. Percy Hatfield: Earlier today, we in this House held a moment of silence on the passing of a great Canadian, Bob White. We honoured Bob White because of his enormous contributions to social justice and for his leadership within the Canadian labour movement.

He dropped out of school when he was 15 and got a job in a furniture plant in Woodstock. He became a shop steward, then the president of his plant's United Auto Workers' local, and soon became an international UAW rep, and, in 1978, the UAW's Canadian director. That's when I first met him.

He was in Windsor often in those days, in a city built on the auto industry. As reporters, we covered every word he said. Of course, sometimes we had to bleep out some of those words.

I well remember the NFB's 1985 documentary Final Offer, and the acrimonious split from the American union leadership that followed that round of contract talks. The internal fight to form the Canadian Auto Workers union was not an easy one. Without Bob White, I doubt it could have happened back then. He was a visionary who made it easier for women, immigrants and people of colour to assume leadership roles.

He went on to lead the Canadian Labour Congress. He was an Officer of the Order of Canada. He had honorary university degrees from the universities of Windsor, Toronto, York and StFX.

I last saw Bob a few years ago tearing up the dance floor at a banquet in Windsor; I think it was for the Unemployed Help Centre. He was a hero to many of us, especially rank-and-file members and retirees, because he never forgot where he came from. I'm pleased to say we were friends. My condolences to his family and to all of those whose lives he touched over these many years.

KINDNESS WEEK

Mr. John Fraser: It's Kindness Week in Ontario, and I was pleased to join with my colleagues the member from Ottawa Centre and the member from Ottawa West—Nepean at Accora Village last week, when we launched Kindness Week.

We were joined by the father and founder of Kindness Week, our friend Rabbi Reuven Bulka; Jeff Turner from Kind Canada; and our host, the Caring and Sharing Exchange; and many others—too many to mention.

Kindness Week became official in Ontario in 2009, and this year is Kind Ottawa's 10th anniversary of

encouraging people to choose to be kind. This year's theme is inclusivity.

Last Saturday, I was able to attend a community appreciation day at the Mosque of Mercy in my riding of Ottawa South. Tuesday morning, there was a multi-faith welcoming committee at the Ottawa airport. All week long, Canadian Blood Services is hosting a blood donor clinic at the Carling Avenue location. World-Changing Kids has launched a kindness petition. I was able to read it yesterday in the Legislature—great work, kids. Keep those petitions coming. There were many acts and events of kindness, too many to mention.

There are five ways of spreading kindness: give, volunteer, say thanks, celebrate kindness and pay it forward. Kindness can be as simple as a smile of acknowledgement, and that's something for all of us to think about.

CANADIAN INTERNATIONAL AUTOSHOW

Mr. Michael Harris: While there is always plenty to celebrate at the Canadian International AutoShow, this year's "O Canada" theme takes it to a new level, as our annual auto exhibition highlights truly Canadian contributions in recognition of our nation's 150th birthday.

This fantastic event, running through Sunday, includes historical highlights such as Canada's first car, the 1867 Seth Taylor steam buggy. Speaker, you may have one of those in your shed there. The 1997 Williams that Canadian racing champion Jacques Villeneuve rode to victory will also be front and centre. Villeneuve remains the only Canadian to have in fact won the Formula One world championship.

From Jacques to Gilles and beyond, Canadian excellence in motorsport will be featured as the auto show rolls through "50 Years of Grand Prix in Canada," featuring Formula One cars from the last half-century,

With over 1,000 cars and trucks on display, including some rare and exclusive exhibits such as the Aston Martin AM-RB 001 hypercar, there is something for everyone.

1510

Our Ontario Provincial Police will be on hand to provide presentations on safe driving, offering test rides of police vehicles and demonstrations from emergency response teams.

There is plenty for the kids as well, with LEGO Batman on hand the rest of the week, while this holiday weekend gave the family some "space" time with their favourite Star Wars stormtrooper.

It's always a great event, and I encourage everyone to head down to the "O Canada" edition of the Canadian International AutoShow to see both the past and future of where our northern automotive dreams can take us.

NANCY DIAMOND

Ms. Jennifer K. French: It is with a heavy heart that I pay tribute to former Oshawa mayor and councillor

Nancy Diamond. She is survived by her daughter Suzie and grandsons, and the countless friends and neighbours she touched in our community.

Nancy has been a tireless advocate, leader and defender of Oshawa. Our city has drawn from her strength and unwavering commitment for a generation. Nancy's passing is a loss to the broader community, but it is also a very personal loss to many. She was a woman of strength, humour, integrity, class and action. She woke up every morning determined to make the world a little better. She was committed to her work and was usually the last to leave city hall each night.

Nancy served as a dedicated volunteer and advocate for equality and fairness. She has been recognized for her contributions and action by many service organizations across the city. She was accessible and approachable and loved building authentic relationships with neighbours across the city.

She valued the work she did, but valued even more the people she worked for. Across the 20 years as long-serving mayor and city and regional councillor, Nancy knew our city inside and out, and loved it. Nancy was a tireless worker for our community. She had the strength of her convictions and would not shy away from a fight worth having.

The services to remember Nancy were wonderfully attended and everyone had a personal memory to share. Most remembered her wisdom, kindness, keen wit and signature smile. They called her a force of nature.

Oshawa is a better and stronger community for Nancy Diamond's years of dedication and her lifetime of service. Her beloved Oshawa will miss her every day.

CONSUMER PROTECTION

Mr. James J. Bradley: Despite warnings from government agencies, the news media and national television programs such as CBC's Marketplace, CTV's W5 or Global's Consumer SOS, residents of Ontario continue to be scammed by individuals who prey upon vulnerable people in an effort to persuade them to part with their hard-earned dollars. Whether by mail, telephone or door-to-door visits, trusting individuals are persuaded by hucksters and fraud artists using a variety of unscrupulous methods to send money or sign contracts that result in significant and unnecessary costs to their victims.

The con artists often represent themselves as government officials and demand to be let into a home to conduct an inspection or view a bill. They use bullying tactics to gain entry and promise the customer substantial savings by signing a contract, often for a new furnace, air conditioner, water heater, water purifier or appliance for a home. Some disguise themselves as Canada Revenue Agency employees, lawyers or simply kind-hearted friends, and they persuade the victims to send money or sign a contract.

Bill 59, which puts consumers first, could be used to restrict unsolicited door-to-door marketing contracts, including contracts for sectors that receive complaints.

Although the legislation I have made reference to and previous bills have endeavoured to protect the consumer, people themselves should proceed with extreme caution and follow the old saying, “If it sounds too good to be true, it probably is too good to be true.”

HALTON REGION

Mr. Ted Arnott: Just over a month ago, I was pleased to attend a meeting at the region of Halton headquarters with regional chair Gary Carr and some members of regional council and staff. We had a great discussion, and I resolved to bring some of their concerns to the floor of the Ontario Legislature at the earliest opportunity.

So here we go:

We urge the government to listen to Halton’s recommendations in the growth plan, OMB reform and the conservation authorities review.

We urge the government to assist Halton with long-term, sustainable infrastructure funding, including keeping commitments to Metrolinx improvements, and to consider the necessary requirements Halton is seeking to fund their infrastructure priorities.

We urge the government to ensure public health funding keeps up with growth and address the long-standing ambulance offloading problem.

We urge the government to favourably consider Halton’s needs for affordable housing, child care spaces and long-term care in the context of any provincial funding decisions for these vital services.

We urge the government to consult Halton on the Greater Golden Horseshoe Transportation Plan and ensure that the capacity of the 401 and the QEW is upgraded to manage growth. We urge the government to develop an effective provincial agriculture strategy and help improve access to broadband Internet.

I am aware that the regional chair, council and staff seek a productive partnership with the government of Ontario, and we want to work together to accomplish shared goals in the best interest of our residents.

COVENANT HOUSE TORONTO

Mr. Arthur Potts: Today I rise to bring awareness and to celebrate Canada’s largest youth shelter, Covenant House Toronto. February is Covenant House Month, and this February 2, Covenant House reached a tremendous milestone: They are now celebrating their 35th year of changing the lives of homeless, at-risk and trafficked youth. They provide 24/7 care to youth in need, and serve as many as 250 youth in a single day.

Based out of MPP Murray’s great riding of Toronto Centre, Covenant House is the country’s largest homeless youth agency, and provides a wide range of services, including a crisis centre, mental health programs, transitional housing services, job training programs and an on-site health centre offering compassionate care to heal the physical and psychological tolls of the street.

The Covenant House vision is to lead change that challenges homeless youth to pursue a life of opportunity.

I’d like to take this opportunity to share a few grim statistics. As many as 1,500 to 2,000 homeless youth are on Toronto streets on a given night. Some 65% of homeless youths have failed to complete high school. Abuse and neglect are some of the major reasons why youth leave home, and some 30% of homeless youths have been involved in some form of the sex trade.

Covenant House has offered opportunity and hope to over 90,000 young people in their 35 years. To do this, the agency relies on donors for about 80% of its budget, so I encourage all those watching at home to go to covenanthoussetoronto.ca and donate today.

I’d like to extend a big congratulations for the tremendous work that Covenant House does for troubled youth to find a better path in life.

SOUP SISTERS

Ms. Sylvia Jones: I’m pleased to rise today to recognize the launch of Soup Sisters in Dufferin-Caledon. As part of a larger nationally growing non-profit soup-making organization, Soup Sisters and Broth Brothers initially launched in 2009 in Calgary. They’ve made over 100,000 bowls of soup with more than 9,500 volunteers. Now three volunteers from my community have launched Soup Sisters in Dufferin-Caledon.

Bringing Soup Sisters into the community was the idea of Lori Robertshaw and the owners of Lavender Blue Catering, Terry Doel and Vanessa Kreuzer, who were looking for a creative way to support Family Transition Place. Through Soup Sisters, participants will be learning how to make nutritional homemade soups with the assistance of a chef facilitator, and Family Transition Place will benefit by receiving a month’s supply of nutritious soups made from scratch.

Dufferin-Caledon is a strong community because it has innovative, industrious and caring volunteers like Lori, Terry and Vanessa, volunteers who see a need, roll up their sleeves—or, in this case, put on an apron—and invite the rest of the community to get involved.

On behalf of all Dufferin-Caledon residents and the Ontario Legislature, I’d like to congratulate Terry, Lori and Vanessa and to invite residents in Dufferin-Caledon to become involved with the Orangeville chapter of Soup Sisters.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I thank all members for their statements.

REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

STANDING COMMITTEE ON THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Mr. Monte McNaughton: Speaker, I beg leave to present a report from the Standing Committee on the Legislative Assembly, pursuant to standing order 111(b).

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Mr. McNaughton presents the committee's report. Does the member wish to make a brief statement?

Mr. Monte McNaughton: It's okay, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Pursuant to standing order 111(b), the report is deemed to be adopted by the House.

Report deemed adopted.

1520

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

ANTI-HUMAN TRAFFICKING ACT, 2017 LOI DE 2017 CONTRE LA TRAITE DE PERSONNES

Ms. Naidoo-Harris moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 96, An Act to enact the Human Trafficking Awareness Day Act, 2017 and the Prevention of and Remedies for Human Trafficking Act, 2017 / Projet de loi 96, Loi édictant la Loi de 2017 sur la Journée de sensibilisation à la traite de personnes et la Loi de 2017 sur la prévention de la traite de personnes et les recours en la matière.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

First reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member for a short statement.

Hon. Indira Naidoo-Harris: Mr. Speaker, this bill, if passed, will enact two statutes: the Human Trafficking Awareness Day Act, 2017, and the Prevention of and Remedies for Human Trafficking Act, 2017.

If passed, this bill will allow survivors to apply for restraining orders against human traffickers, make it easier for survivors of human trafficking to get compensation from those who trafficked them, and proclaim February 22 of each year as Human Trafficking Awareness Day.

STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

ANTI-BULLYING INITIATIVES

Hon. Mitzie Hunter: I'm honoured to rise in the House today to recognize Pink Shirt Day. As we are all aware, a safe, inclusive and accepting school environment is essential for students to succeed in the classroom and in life. That is why, today, thousands of students and educators across the province and the country will be recognizing Pink Shirt Day.

Pink Shirt Day was first started in 2007 by two high school students from Nova Scotia, David Shepherd and

Travis Price. When they discovered that a classmate was bullied for wearing a pink shirt to school, they decided to support this student. They bought pink shirts and handed them out to their fellow students to wear to school. To their surprise, the next day, many students at the school were wearing the purchased shirts, and hundreds wore their own pink clothing. When the teen who was being bullied arrived at school, he was overwhelmed and moved by the show of support. By standing up to bullying, they showed that it was unacceptable at school.

Ten years later, Pink Shirt Day has become an important annual event to speak out against bullying in schools, in workplaces and in communities.

Mr. Speaker, Ontario has led the way in taking action against bullying. We have a strong legislative framework and policy framework, and have developed resources to assist school boards in addressing bullying and victimization through prevention, intervention and support.

The Accepting Schools Act, which passed in 2012, was the first legislation of its kind in Canada. This important piece of legislation helps make every school in Ontario a safe, inclusive and accepting place to learn, while also ensuring every student has the support to thrive and to succeed.

It is vital that we all work together to support our children and our students. Throughout the province, many schools and school communities are already demonstrating leadership in fostering positive school environments through whole-school approaches that involve everyone in the school community.

I am pleased that for the last six years, we have recognized many school communities in Ontario with the Premier's Award for safe and accepting schools. These awards recognize and celebrate the innovative work that safe and accepting school teams do in promoting a positive school climate and supporting student achievement and well-being. I want to thank our educators, our students, our school communities and parents for their leadership and commitment in creating safe, inclusive and accepting school environments that are essential for student achievement and well-being.

Promoting well-being is also a key fundamental goal of our renewed vision for education in Ontario. Research shows that students and children who have a positive sense of well-being are more resilient and better positioned to make positive and healthy choices to support their life-long learning. Students cannot properly focus on their studies if they do not feel safe or welcomed at school.

We know that bullying and harassment has an immediate impact on student well-being and their ability to succeed in schools. Children who have a positive sense of self are better equipped to learn and meet the challenges of a fast-paced and increasingly interconnected world.

That is why Pink Shirt Day is so important. Today is an important reminder that we all have an important part to play in creating a positive school climate and in promoting healthy and respectful relationships. Those

efforts must not be limited to a single day but, instead, woven into day-to-day practices and embedded in the culture of our schools. By creating this culture we will help prepare our students to develop into caring, confident and capable citizens.

I encourage every member in the House to recognize Pink Shirt Day today and promote the well-being of our students so that everyone feels respected, accepted and valued. Today, let's use this opportunity to come together to make a difference in the lives of Ontario's children, students and families.

HUMAN TRAFFICKING

Hon. Indira Naidoo-Harris: Mr. Speaker, earlier today I was proud to introduce legislative proposals that would, if passed, protect Ontarians from the terrible crime of human trafficking. These proposals would better assist survivors, hold traffickers accountable for their crimes and mobilize public opinion to drive human trafficking from Ontario.

Speaker, I want you to know that human trafficking, in all of its forms, will not be tolerated in Ontario. We have taken strong actions to reduce domestic violence, sexual violence and harassment and, I am proud to say, to reduce the brutal trafficking of human beings for sexual and other exploitative purposes.

Human trafficking is a deplorable and inhumane crime. It is a violation of the fundamental human right to be free and to control one's body. It is a crime that is often hidden but it is happening right outside these doors and across Ontario. Sadly, our province is a major centre for human trafficking, and of all the cases reported to police across Canada, 65% come from Ontario. This is shocking and it's unacceptable.

We know the human traffickers prey on the most vulnerable in our society. They use a variety of tactics to control, abuse and exploit victims for their own financial gain. It is a brutal crime that can affect victims for a lifetime. Survivors of human trafficking often experience serious and long-term trauma.

Speaker, as minister responsible for the status of women, Ontario's first standalone ministry dedicated to the security and empowerment of women and girls, I want you to know that human trafficking will not be tolerated in our society.

Last June, our government announced an investment of up to \$72 million for Ontario's strategy to end human trafficking and to help survivors recover and rebuild their lives. I want to recognize the invaluable contributions of my cabinet colleagues, the Attorney General, of course, and the Minister of Community and Social Services, and their respective ministries for their work developing and implementing this important strategy. I also want to recognize the hard work of the member from Haliburton-Kawartha Lakes-Brock.

Since the introduction of our strategy to end human trafficking last June, together we've made significant progress. For example, crown attorneys, police services

and workplace health and safety inspectors have received additional training in dealing with human trafficking. Our government also followed through on our commitment to establish the first-ever anti-human trafficking coordination office in Ontario. It's historic, and this is really amazing news. This office is focused on building and strengthening connections across the law enforcement, justice, social, health, education and child welfare sectors—because ending human trafficking must be a collaborative effort. It must be a partnership in order to be successful. We must work together to put a stop to this terrible crime.

1530

I am also pleased to announce that in addition to introducing this bill, the government has made two very important regulatory changes.

First, we have expanded the list of recipients that may be eligible to receive grants in the Civil Remedies Act, 2001 regulation to include community organizations—a very important move. This will allow community organizations to access an additional source of funding to assist victims of crime, including victims of human trafficking.

Second, we have expanded the list of Criminal Code offences in the Victims' Bill of Rights, 1995 regulation to include human trafficking offences. This will allow survivors to sue a person who has been convicted of human trafficking for emotional distress and bodily harm resulting from the distress.

As I said at the outset, Speaker, human trafficking is part of the much broader issue of violence against women, youth and children, for which our government has zero tolerance. I want you to know that we have made progress. Ontario is a safer and better place as a result of our efforts. But there is absolutely more work still to be done. With the release of our strategy last June, we took a significant step towards ending human trafficking in this province. Today's legislative proposals, if passed, would take us one very important step closer to reaching our goal of a province where everyone lives free of the fear, threat or experience of exploitation and violence.

The trafficking of human beings is one of the most heinous imaginable crimes out there. It is a serious violation of human rights. It is intolerable and unacceptable, and it is wrong. We all must do everything we can together to put an end to it.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): It is now time for responses.

ANTI-BULLYING INITIATIVES

Mr. Lorne Coe: Pink Shirt Day highlights the importance of our ongoing struggle against bullying, discrimination, homophobia and transphobia in schools and communities.

Speaker, we know that a safe, inclusive and accepting school environment is essential for students to succeed in the classroom and beyond. It is the responsibility of everyone in our schools and local communities to

promote respectful relationships that support the emotional, social and physical development of children and students.

Many schools and school communities are already demonstrating leadership and fostering and maintaining positive school climates through initiatives that engage all members of the school community. I want to thank our educators, students and school communities for their leadership and commitment in creating safe, inclusive and accepting school environments that are essential for student achievement and well-being.

Speaker, Pink Shirt Day is now celebrated in communities across Ontario in order to highlight diversity and create a more tolerant society. Largely due to anti-bullying campaigns that encourage individuals to speak out, communities are becoming more and more aware of issues of discrimination. It's also important that victims of bullying know that they're not alone and that there is help and support available. Wearing a pink shirt on this day sends a strong message to them that others care. Often, the simple act of wearing a shirt can start conversations, and conversations can be a big step towards healing and helping.

Speaker, I encourage every member in the House today to continue to promote the well-being of our students so that everyone feels respected, accepted and valued. Today, let's use this opportunity to come together to make a difference, a difference in the lives of Ontario's children, students and families, and continue to speak out against discrimination each and every day.

HUMAN TRAFFICKING

Ms. Laurie Scott: I'm very happy to stand here in the Legislature and thank the minister responsible for the status of women and the Attorney General for their remarks, for introducing this bill, and for their kind acknowledgement of the work that has been done on this.

This morning, the Attorney General's staff and their officials were kind enough to come over and brief me on the content of the new Anti-Human Trafficking Act. I was very pleasantly surprised by the fact that the government's legislation is, in many ways, identical to my own private member's bill, the Saving the Girl Next Door Act. I kind of like my title better, but I'm happy to see that the government is acting on the recommendations made in my bill, including the establishment of Human Trafficking Awareness Day, since education and awareness are so important in this fight, and that February 22—today—is the day, going forward, that will be Human Trafficking Awareness Day. Thank you for that.

I can't help but think that the government could have, and should have, acted sooner. Of course, they expect me to say that. My colleagues know that I originally introduced the Saving the Girl Next Door Act exactly one year ago last week. The bill was the result of a great deal of stakeholder consultation, and I was pleased that it received unanimous support from this House on two

separate occasions. Sadly, it was never brought up to debate in the justice committee by the government members, but we now finally see the government embracing the changes that stakeholders, including victims services organizations, police officers and victims themselves, have long been calling for. I want to thank many of those who are present in the gallery for their contributions to this bill.

So that's a good thing. I've always said that I'm open to amending the Saving the Girl Next Door Act. In committee, we could have made the technical changes that the government's new legislation includes. It could have been accommodated. If that had happened, these important changes to the law could have been in place months ago, helping to protect our vulnerable women and girls. That being said, I truly hope that the government makes this, their new legislation, a priority. They can be assured of our party's support in moving it forward.

I want to ask, Mr. Speaker, if I could just have a few more seconds—oh, he's giving me the evil eye. But I just want to take the opportunity to thank the select committee that was established in the fall of 2014. Also, I want to thank the survivors, and I want to say to Timea Nagy, Simone Bell, Bridget Perrier, Casandra Diamond and activists like Megan Walker and many others: It is your courage to come forward and tell your stories that has made the difference here today in this legislation.

ANTI-BULLYING INITIATIVES

Ms. Peggy Sattler: I'm pleased to rise today on behalf of the Ontario NDP caucus to respond to the ministers' statements on Pink Shirt Day and anti-human trafficking.

In 2007, two grade 12 students in Nova Scotia saw a new student being bullied with homophobic slurs because he had worn a pink shirt to school. Instead of looking the other way, David Shepherd and Travis Price decided to act. They organized a school protest, buying and distributing 50 pink T-shirts to their friends and encouraging others to wear pink the next day.

That simple act of kindness and solidarity 10 years ago unleashed a sea of pink that has washed to 25 countries and engaged students, schools, communities, law enforcement and Legislatures in standing up to bullying. Anyone who has ever been bullied, whose child has been bullied, understands the pain and devastation that bullying can cause.

But the impact reaches beyond the victim and the bully. Bullying can be just as harmful to the bystander, especially those who feel powerless to intervene. Pink Shirt Day gives bystanders a tool to respond to bullying. By wearing pink, we are signalling that we will not tolerate bullying anywhere.

1540

I want to recognize the amazing work that is being done in schools to empower bystanders and to engage students in initiatives like Pink Shirt Day. Schools are doing this work in the face of provincial underfunding that is challenging the capacity of education workers to

manage the increasingly complex behavioural and mental health needs of students. The effective implementation of anti-bullying programs requires resources. It requires more educational assistants in our schools, more child and youth workers, behavioural counsellors, psychologists and social workers.

At the same time, the pervasiveness of bullying in schools, homes, workplaces and online requires a whole-community response, which is why programs like, in my community, the city of London, The Pledge to End Bullying are so important.

But meaningful bullying prevention must be more than a one-time event, more than wearing pink one day or reciting a pledge. Creating a community where everyone feels safe, valued and included requires an ongoing commitment to treat others with kindness and respect, and to speak out against bullying whenever and wherever we see it.

HUMAN TRAFFICKING

Ms. Peggy Sattler: Last June, the government's announcement of \$72 million over four years on a strategy to end human trafficking was greeted with cautious optimism by many across the province. After years of advocacy, after years of research reports and calls to action, the government was finally acknowledging the reality that Ontario has become a major hub for human trafficking. This is especially the case along the 401 corridor from Windsor to Ottawa, which led the Ottawa Police Service to pilot a human trafficking unit in 2013, and to the establishment just last month of a permanent human trafficking unit within the London Police Service.

In London, police have reported a shocking spike in the number of women and girls being trafficked—girls whose average age is just 13. In only 17 months since July 2015, the London Abused Women's Centre has assisted 158 women and girls who identify as being sex-trafficked and sexually exploited.

In the face of this explosion of human trafficking, the lack of detail in the Liberals' June announcement raised some concerns, especially around gaps in the strategy. The Canadian Centre to End Human Trafficking emphasized the need for a coordinated and integrated system of data collection from law enforcement and front-line agencies to ensure that policy is informed by valid, reliable data.

Human trafficking remains one of the most under-reported crimes because victims fear coming forward, or may not even recognize that they are being trafficked. And as the Ontario Native Women's Association points out, there is a particular lack of accurate information about the trafficking of indigenous women and girls.

With Ontario receiving the vast majority of immigrant and migrant workers, the FCJ Refugee Centre called on the government to ensure an equal focus on ending labour trafficking, as well as supporting internationally trafficked persons, who are especially vulnerable to exploitation.

Survivor organizations like Voicefound emphasize the need for long-term support for victims of trafficking, and increased multi-year funding for survivor-centric efforts for research and recovery.

While the New Democrats appreciate the introduction of legislation to advance the government's strategy, we will be watching closely to see how the dollars are allocated and to ensure that any new programs and policies reflect the recommendations that are being brought forward by those who have already been working for years to deal with this horrific crime.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I thank all members for their statements. It is therefore now time for petitions.

PETITIONS

HYDRO RATES

Mr. John Yakabuski: I have added to the thousands on this petition that I've presented in the past. More have been received in my office.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas electricity rates have risen by more than 300% since the current government took office; and

“Whereas over half of Ontarians' power bills are regulatory and delivery charges and the global adjustment; and

“Whereas the global adjustment is a tangible measure of how much Ontario must overpay for unneeded wind and solar power, and the cost of offloading excess power to our neighbours at a loss; and

“Whereas the market rate for electricity, according to IESO data, has been less than three cents per kilowatt hour to date in 2016, yet the ... government's lack of responsible science-based planning has not allowed these reductions to be passed on to Ontarians, resulting in electrical bills several times more than that amount; and

“Whereas the implementation of cap-and-trade will drive the cost of electricity even higher and deny Ontarians the option to choose affordable natural gas heating; and

“Whereas more and more Ontarians are being forced to cut down on essential expenses such as food and medicines in order to pay their increasingly unaffordable electricity bills; and

“Whereas the ill-conceived ... policies of this government that ignored the advice of independent experts and government agencies, such as the Ontario Energy Board (OEB) and the independent electrical system operator (IESO), and are not based on science have resulted in Ontarians' electricity costs rising, despite lower natural gas costs and increased energy conservation in the province;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

“To take immediate steps to reduce the total cost of electricity paid for by Ontarians, including costs associated with power consumed, the global adjustment, delivery charges, administrative charges, tax and any other charges added to Ontarians’ energy bills.”

Speaker, I support this petition, affix my name to it and send it down with legislative page Jack.

ENERGY CONSERVATION

Miss Monique Taylor: I have a “Petition to Add Restoration of Existing Doors and Windows to any Grant, Tax Incentive or Funding Projects Initiated to Aid in Energy Conservation.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas it has been widely demonstrated that properly restored or rehabilitated old wooden windows fitted with storms where needed are as energy-efficient as new replacement products, and restored windows and doors take up a fraction of the carbon footprint of new products which do not have the lifespan of older windows;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

“That any funding made available for replacement of doors and windows also be made available for the restoration of existing doors and windows.”

I agree with this petition. I am going to give it to page Ismael to bring to the table.

NANJING MASSACRE

Ms. Soo Wong: I have a petition addressed to the Legislative Assembly, signed by over 12,000 Ontarians, Mr. Speaker, across Ontario from London to Hamilton—across southwestern Ontario.

“Whereas the events in Asian countries during the Second World War are not well-known;

“Whereas Ontarians have not had an opportunity for a thorough discussion and examination of the World War II atrocities in Asia;

“Whereas Ontarians are unfamiliar with the World War II atrocities in Asia;

“Whereas Ontario is recognized as an inclusive society;

“Whereas Ontario is the home to one of the largest Asian populations in Canada, with over 2.6 million in 2011;

“Whereas some Ontarians have direct relationships with victims and survivors of the Nanjing Massacre, whose stories are untold;

“Whereas the Nanjing Massacre was an atrocity with over 200,000 Chinese civilians and soldiers alike were indiscriminately killed, and tens of thousands of women were sexually assaulted, in the Japanese capture of the city;

“Whereas December 13, 2017, marks the 80th anniversary of the Nanjing Massacre;

“Whereas designating December 13 each year as the Nanjing Massacre Commemorative Day in Ontario will provide an opportunity for all Ontarians, especially the Asian community, to gather, remember, and honour the victims of families affected by the Nanjing Massacre;

“We, the undersigned residents of Ontario, urge the members of the Ontario Legislative Assembly to pass Bill 79, declaring Dec. 13 as Nanjing Massacre Commemorative Day.”

I fully support the petition. I will give my 12,000-plus petition to Prey.

ROAD SAFETY

Mr. Ted Arnott: I have a petition that’s signed by more than 400 people from the community of Rockwood, and it reads as follows:

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas ever since École Harris Mill Public School opened in Rockwood in September 2014, a significant number of students must cross Highway 7, a busy provincial highway, at MacLennan Street/Dunbar Street in order to walk to and from school each day;

“Whereas township of Guelph/Eramosa Mayor Chris White, council and staff are concerned about student safety and have proactively implemented a guarded school crossing at the intersection of Highway 7 and MacLennan Street/Dunbar Street in September 2014 for the safety of children crossing Highway 7, and have had an ongoing dialogue with the Ministry of Transportation about the safety of the school crossing and the need for traffic signals at the intersection;

1550

“Whereas our local residents, including seniors, need to cross this intersection safely as well;

“Whereas the Ministry of Transportation has carried out traffic studies at the intersection of Highway 7 and MacLennan Street/Dunbar Street and advised the township of Guelph/Eramosa in 2015 that the intersection meets the provincial warrants for traffic signals;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

“To fund and install traffic signals at the intersection of Highway 7 and MacLennan Street/Dunbar Street in Rockwood as soon as possible.”

I completely agree with this petition and have affixed my signature to it as well.

SCHOOL CLOSURES

M^{me} France Gélinas: I’m pleased to present this petition—actually, there’s a whole bunch of them—that comes from Levack, Onaping, Dowling, Chelmsford, Azilda, Lively, Naughton and Whitefish in my riding, as well as Mrs. Kathryn O’Leary. It reads as follows:

“Whereas the provincial funding formula does not recognize differences across the province, forces local school boards to compete with each other for students

and does not allow capital dollars to be transferred to operating accounts where it makes sense; and

“Whereas school boards have now been forced into situations where they have to propose school closures due to inflexible policies and programs of the province; and

“Whereas under the current Pupil Accommodation Review Guideline (PARG), modified accommodation reviews are allowed with inadequate community consultation and insufficient assessment of the full impacts of school closures, particularly where schools being proposed for closure will result in no school in an area; and

“Whereas the PARG is flawed and school closures proposed under it will result in negative student outcomes and opportunities, irreversible impacts to families and communities and will undermine the mandates of municipalities and other provincial ministries;”

They “petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

“To place an immediate moratorium on all school closures across Ontario and to suspend all pupil accommodation reviews until the PARG and all funding programs have been subject to a substantial review by an all-party committee that will examine the effects of extensive school closures on the academic, social, environmental and economic fabric of students, families, communities and the province.”

I support this petition and will affix my name to it, and I ask page Luca to bring it to the Clerk.

ICE MACHINES

Mr. James J. Bradley: “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas ice machines are found everywhere throughout the health care system, including long-term-care facilities and hospitals; and

“Whereas numerous bacteria and viruses are known to contaminate ice cubes, including cholera, typhoid fever, salmonella, legionella, E. coli, shigella, hepatitis A and norovirus I and II; and

“Whereas the lack of regulation increases the probability of consuming ice from ice machines with unhygienic levels of bacteria and/or viruses, putting public safety at risk; and

“Whereas individuals consuming ice from a contaminated ice machine in a hospital or long-term-care facility are at a greater risk due to potentially weakened immune systems; and

“Whereas the inherent risk and rate at which both bacteria and biofilm grow inside ice machines have caused other countries to mandate the cleaning of ice machines; and

“Whereas there are currently no mandates or guidelines on the frequency or thoroughness of cleaning for institutional ice machines in hospitals, long-term-care or other health care facilities;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

“That the province of Ontario establish and enforce cleaning and hygiene standards for all institutional ice machines in provincially funded and/or operated facilities.”

HYDRO RATES

Mr. Rick Nicholls: “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas electricity rates have risen by more than 300% since the current Liberal government took office;

“Whereas over half of Ontarians’ power bills are regulatory and delivery charges and the global adjustment;

“Whereas the global adjustment is a tangible measure of how much Ontario must overpay for unneeded wind and solar power, and the cost of offloading excess power to our neighbours at a loss;

“Whereas the market rate for electricity, according to IESO data, has been less than three cents per kilowatt hour to date in 2016, yet the Liberal government’s lack of responsible science-based planning has not allowed these reductions to be passed on to Ontarians, resulting in electrical bills several times more than that amount; and

“Whereas the implementation of cap-and-trade will drive the cost of electricity even higher and deny Ontarians the option to choose affordable natural gas heating; and

“Whereas more and more Ontarians are being forced to cut down on essential expenses such as food and medicines in order to pay their increasingly unaffordable electricity” rates; and

“Whereas the ill-conceived energy policies of this Liberal government that ignored the advice of independent experts and government agencies, such as the Ontario Energy Board (OEB) and the independent electrical system operator (IESO), and are not based on science have resulted in Ontarians’ electricity costs rising, despite lower natural gas costs and increased energy conservation in the province;

“Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to take immediate steps to reduce the total cost of electricity paid for by Ontarians, including costs associated with power consumed, the global adjustment, delivery charges, administrative charges, tax and any other charges added to Ontarians’ energy bills.”

I agree with this. I’ve signed my name and will give it to Sebastian.

PRIVATIZATION OF PUBLIC ASSETS

Miss Monique Taylor: I have a petition named “Hydro One Not for Sale!

“Petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the provincial government is creating a privatization scheme that will lead to higher hydro rates, lower reliability, and hundreds of millions less for our schools, roads, and hospitals; and

“Whereas the privatization scheme will be particularly harmful to northern and First Nations communities; and

“Whereas the provincial government is creating this privatization scheme under a veil of secrecy that means Ontarians don’t have a say on a change that will affect their lives dramatically; and

“Whereas it is not too late to cancel the scheme;

“Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

“That the province of Ontario immediately cancel its scheme to privatize Ontario’s Hydro One.”

I couldn’t agree with it any more. I’m going to affix my name to it and give to page Elizabeth-Anne to bring to the Clerk.

HOME INSPECTION INDUSTRY

Mr. James J. Bradley: I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Whereas home inspections are an integral part of the real estate transaction; and

“Whereas there are no current rules and education system to qualify who is and who is not a home inspector; and

“Whereas the public interest is best served by protecting consumers against receiving a bad home inspection;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

“Ensure the speedy passage of Bill 59, Putting Consumers First Act, 2016, and mandate the government of Ontario to bring in a strong qualifications regime for home inspectors.”

I provide this petition to Nolan to bring to the table.

ACCESS TO JUSTICE

Mr. Jim McDonell: I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Whereas in 2015 Ontario had, at 43.8%, the highest rate in Canada of charges withdrawn, stayed or otherwise removed prior to a trial; and

“Whereas the situation causes significant costs to be incurred by the legal system, corrections, the individuals facing the charges and the general public whose access to prompt justice is impaired; and

“Whereas facing a criminal charge imposes significant material and mental cost on individuals, as well as limiting their liberty and ability to work and live in their community; and

“Whereas there is no remedy for compensating innocent Ontarians whose lives and livelihoods have been injured through being wrongfully accused;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

“To develop and fund a program to assist Ontarians who have been wrongfully accused; and

“To study Ontario’s unacceptably high rate of stayed and withdrawn charges, and to enact reforms to rectify the situation.”

I agree with this and will pass it off to page Grace.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): The time for petitions is over.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

MEDICAL ASSISTANCE IN DYING STATUTE LAW AMENDMENT ACT, 2017

LOI DE 2017 MODIFIANT DES LOIS EN CE QUI CONCERNE L'AIDE MÉDICALE À MOURIR

Resuming the debate adjourned on February 21, 2017, on the motion for second reading of the following bill:

Bill 84, An Act to amend various Acts with respect to medical assistance in dying / Projet de loi 84, Loi modifiant diverses lois en ce qui concerne l'aide médicale à mourir.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): I believe the last time, the NDP had it. The member from Nickel Belt.

M^{me} France Gélinas: It will be my pleasure to share a few thoughts in this one-hour lead I have on Bill 84, Medical Assistance in Dying, also known as MAID for its acronym M-A-I-D.

So why do we have this bill? The short answer is because we need a legal framework for medical assistance in dying. This is something that used to be under the Criminal Code; it was not allowed to be performed anywhere in Canada, including Ontario. This is something that is now available to people under very strict and limited circumstances—but that is now available to people.

1600

In order to make this possible, long legislative routes had to be followed, starting with the Supreme Court, which deemed that a person who wanted help in ending their life should not be treated as a criminal. It did give the federal government a deadline to come up with legislation, which they did on June 17 of last year. The federal government put forward bill C-14, which allowed for medical assistance in dying. And now, in Ontario, a series of bills have to be changed or tweaked to allow for this procedure to be available to people who so wish—again, in very, very specific circumstances.

What does the bill do? The first thing it does is amend the Coroners Act. The Coroners Act will be amended so that every time there is medical assistance in dying, the physician or the nurse practitioner who helps that particular patient will have to report to the coroner that medical assistance in dying was provided to that particular person. The coroner, on the other side—although it will be mandatory for the nurse practitioner or the physician to report this act to the coroner, it will not be necessary for the coroner to do an investigation. It will be

up to their discretion if he or she decides to do an investigation.

The bill will mandate, once passed, that the Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services review the coroner's role within two years. So although we will have a registry of every time medical assistance in dying is used in Ontario, this registry will be through the coroner—because this act will have to be reported to the coroner every time, after two years, the Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services will do a review to see how this procedure has been done and if there are any changes that need to be done.

The second part of the bill is to amend the Excellent Care for All Act. Basically, it will be to ensure that if a person decides to use medical aid in dying, they will not be denied a right or refused a benefit that would otherwise have been allotted to them. So you can think through insurance policies or different benefits that people purchase in case of death; those benefits and those policies will have to be respected, and whatever benefit the family could get will have to be given to the family. Nobody will be denied a right or refused a benefit because their loved one has decided to use medical assistance in dying.

The bill will also change the Excellent Care for All Act so that it will provide immunity to physicians and nurse practitioners and those who assist them in the lawful provision of MAID. You can think maybe a pharmacist will be involved, or maybe other health care professionals. It will make it clear that if a person seeks the help of a physician or a nurse practitioner—if a pharmacist dispenses the medication needed to help somebody in dying, they will be provided immunity from reprisal and from bringing them to court.

There are, though, strict regulations that if there is alleged negligence in doing that, then the health professional can still be brought in front of their colleges or court if negligence is suspected or proven.

It will also amend the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act as well as the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act so that the FIPPA and the MFIPPA requests will still be allowed, but any identifying information from the clinician or the facility will be blocked out. So you will not be able to use FIPPA or MFIPPA to find out who provides medical assistance in dying and where medical assistance in dying is provided.

The act changes the Vital Statistics Act and regulations from 1994 and it clarifies that the coroner does not need to sign the medical certificate when somebody decides to end their life through medical assistance in dying—except the coroner can still choose to investigate that death. So you won't need a coroner's certificate or signature when people choose to use medical assistance in dying.

Lastly, the bill amends the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board, WSIB, to clarify that a worker who receives medical assistance in dying is deemed to have died from the injury or disease for which the worker was

deemed eligible to receive MAID. This is designed to make sure that a claim made on the WSIB where a worker receives MAID would be determined based on the illness and the disease, and not based on the cause of death. Here again, it's to protect the families and the loved ones left behind who may be eligible for a pension or some kind of compensation for the loss of their loved one through a work-related injury.

This is all that the bill does. That's it; that's all. What it does not do is huge, Speaker. As much as it took me less than a few minutes to go through what's in the bill, it is what's not in the bill that is most worrying.

Here we have a situation where we know that medical assistance in dying is a contentious issue. We have all received emails and other forms of communication through our constituency offices for people who are either for it and want their loved one to have access, or who are opposed to it and would like us in this chamber to make sure that we respect the fact that some people are opposed to this—especially to accommodate physicians and nurse practitioners who object to providing MAID, and specifically for the CPSO requirement that objecting physicians provide an effective referral to patients who request MAID.

I'm bringing this forward because it is but one example of how poorly Ontario has handled this file, how poorly—and I will leave this at the feet of the Minister of Health, who is the steward of our health care system—we have done that.

Right now, what we have in Ontario is a very polarized group of people: people who are for it and want it to be accessible and find that what we have in place failed them rather than helped them; and then people who are opposed to it. But for none of them is there a safe place for them to be informed or for them to be heard, and maybe for all of us to try to find a little bit of middle ground between those two polarized positions.

1610

Let me tell you, Speaker, that not every Legislative Assembly has done this as poorly as we have. I have a report from l'Assemblée nationale du Québec—the equivalent of the Legislative Assembly, but in our sister province to the east, Quebec. What did they do differently? Well, everything. Back in 2009, they started consultations. They put a select committee of the Legislature together—very similar to what I had asked the Minister of Health to do—and first, they educated themselves. They got feedback from experts talking about exceptions for conscience, looking at who had been trying, looking at some of the cases that had gone through court. Then they put forward a paper to inform the people of Quebec as to what they had found. Then the select committee went and visited every corner of their province. I will give you some of the stats on what they did, because it is pretty impressive. They were called the Select Committee on Dying with Dignity. They consulted with 32 experts. They made 3,200 copies of their consultation paper. They listened to 273 briefs. Some 239 individuals and organizations were heard. They held 29

days of public hearings throughout their province, and 114 individuals were heard during the open-mike period. Some 6,558 people answered their online questionnaire. They received 16,000 comments by email, mail, fax and online questionnaire. They went abroad to France, Belgium and the Netherlands to learn how their medical assistance in dying was doing. And they held 51 deliberative meetings with the committee members.

I'm telling you all this, Speaker, because there is a huge pent-up demand within our province for people to know more, to understand, to be heard, to find some middle ground, but right now in Ontario, there is no safe ground for those conversations to take place. We have a huge amount of chatter on Facebook, Twitter and every social media known to mankind, which brings us further and further apart, because the people who are at both poles keep finding arguments why their pole is where the conversation should be. Meanwhile, there are the rest of us, 13 million Ontarians, who just want to know more, who just want to understand what those changes are all about, who want to understand how it will work: "How will we protect the vulnerable? How do we make sure that my convictions will be respected? How do we make sure that my wishes will be respected?" For all of those 13 million Ontarians, the answer is a big black hole. They looked to us to give them an opportunity, a safe place to be heard, a safe place to learn, but we never did that. All that the minister did was bring forward this piece of legislation that basically makes changes to five other pieces of legislation that nobody really understands and nobody really knows about except for us, the people who live here—but I would even say, listening to some of the comments that were made during the hour lead from the Liberals, as well as the hour lead from the PCs, that they themselves still have a lot of questions about medical assistance in dying.

I want to thank some of the people from Quebec: Maryse Gaudreault from Hull; Véronique Hivon de Joliette; Noëlla Champagne de Champlain; Francine Charbonneau des Mille-Îles; Benoit Charette de Deux-Montagnes; Germain Chevarie des Îles-de-la-Madeleine; Amir Khadir de Mercier; Pierre Reid de Orford; et Monique Richard de Marguerite-D'Youville. Those were the nine MPPs from the province of Quebec who did the select committee and gave people an opportunity to be heard.

It is clear that Ontarians are ready to have this debate. Ontarians want to have a chance to be heard.

I will quote a few things from the work that was done by the committee in Quebec.

They say, "Given the large turnout at the hearings, it is clear that Quebecers were ready for this debate and felt it was important. In fact, the debate spread well beyond Parliament, and the public hearings gave rise to countless conferences, retreats and programs devoted to the subject. Moreover, the committee's consultation paper has been used in numerous educational projects in high schools, colleges and universities alike. By making the public aware of the topics debated, we feel we have

paved the way to a more open discussion of end-of-life matters, and that, in and of itself, is a legacy the committee will leave behind."

You can see that with the leadership of other legislative assemblies—the people of Quebec have been able to have this middle-ground talk, and it was for the better for all of them. The people of Quebec understand the rules. They understand how their views can be protected. They understand how their wishes can be carried through.

They released their consultation paper in May 2010. I was following closely what was going on in the province next to us because, like many of us, I do receive emails in my mailbox, I do receive Facebook messages, and people make appointments to come and talk to me, as well as phoning my office to talk about this subject. Unfortunately, talking to me is not the same as having this opportunity to have a safe place to move this community discussion forward.

After the release of their paper, they went on to invite the public to participate in general consultations. Quebecers were asked to submit their point of view by way of briefs or comments, by taking part in a public meeting in one of the cities visited or by completing an online questionnaire on the National Assembly website.

It's interesting that 75% of the briefs received were from citizens as opposed to organizations. And even more surprising was that 30% of the online respondents were under the age of 30. It's really to show that I don't think too many 30-year-olds think about death every morning, but they do have questions. They want to get engaged, and they have this opportunity over there which we never had.

So whether we talk about refusal and cessation of treatment, whether we talk about palliative care, palliative sedation or advanced medical directives, they were telling us that Quebecers conducted themselves in a dignified and respectful manner throughout the consultation. The committee members were really impressed by the "calm and frank discussions, which were extremely enriching, with citizens graciously accepting our devil's advocate role."

1620

The committee report was presented unanimously at the National Assembly and to the public. It did a lot to bring definition so that everybody understood what different terminology meant. It brought a lot to see what is part of legal, and what is part of the College of Physicians and Surgeons, and brought forward what it means to refuse or have cessation of treatment. What's included in palliative care? What is included in palliative sedation? How do you plan end-of-life care? How do you plan for incapacity? All of those topics are now debated. They have a good summary of all of those in their report. The report can be accessed by any Quebecer who did not have a chance to participate but still has questions.

But none of that is available to the people of Ontario.

I will tell you that I don't know what the people of Ontario would say, as a whole, but I'm pretty sure that if

we took the time to listen to them, a whole bunch of them would talk about improved access to palliative care.

I know that my colleague from the PCs yesterday spent quite a bit of time, during his hour lead, talking about the fact that he does not have a palliative care hospice in the area that he represents. He's not alone, Speaker. There are very few hospices in Ontario. There are very many communities who would like to have hospice palliative care, but very few of them have it. Why? Well, it always comes down to priorities. Hospices, for reasons unknown—if you receive your palliative care in the hospital, the hospital is funded fully for offering that care to you. But if you receive the exact same care—I would go out on a limb and say it's probably way better palliative care—in a hospice, the hospice only gets about 70 cents to the dollar. The other 25 to 30 cents to the dollar, they have to fundraise that. My colleague has put forward some of the examples of the very creative fundraising efforts that they have put forward.

Think about a small community, maybe a small community that is not part of a wealthy part of our province, that has to fundraise to build a hospice and then sees itself with an ongoing operating fundraising effort to be made because we don't fully fund the operation of hospices in Ontario.

You have a lot of communities where hospice palliative care is not available and will never be available. Is it because the people don't need them? Is it because the people don't want them? Absolutely not. It's because we have a government that did not take the time to listen to what was needed in our province.

We do have palliative care through our cancer treatment centres. We have a good network of cancer treatment centres throughout our province. We could still do more, but we have a strong network. The people whose cancer treatments, unfortunately, are not successful will have access to palliative care through our cancer treatment centres, but only if they agree to the care. The minute you exercise your right to say, "I have had enough of this; I don't want chemotherapy anymore; I don't want to take those pills anymore; I don't want radiation anymore," everything else ends. All of the support from the nurse clinicians that help the people with cancer care, all of the education that is available to you, the pharmacist, the nurse on call: All of this ends in Ontario the minute you say, "I don't want treatment anymore."

Is this really good palliative care, Speaker? We have a right to decide if we want treatment or not, but the minute we choose not to take that cancer treatment is the minute every other service that was available to you is not available to you anymore. I think if the minister had taken the time to listen to people who want to talk about end-of-life care, he would have heard about this and hopefully made changes so that if a person exercises their right to stop their cancer treatment, they do not lose access to everything else that the cancer treatment centre has to offer to them.

Other ones, suffering from degenerative diseases or multiple other medical conditions, don't have access to palliative care unless they are admitted into the hospital. Had we taken the time to talk to people, it wouldn't have been long at all before we would have heard that people are more interested in dying in the comfort of their home than dying in a hospital. People would like to have a strong and robust home care system to help them live the last days of their life in the comfort and dignity of their own home. But you can only do that, Speaker, if you have good home care.

It's not the first time you hear that from me: Our home care system is broken. Our home care system fails more people than it helps every single day. Our home care system has been privatized to the X degree, where the billions of dollars that leave the Ministry of Health will be transferred to the LHINs, which still now transfer those monies to the CCACs, which then have a competitive bidding system so that a whole bunch of international, for-profit companies bid for those contracts. And then the person who actually will come into your house to deliver the care will make \$16 an hour, sitting by the phone, hoping to get enough shifts to pay the rent and the hydro bill at the end of the week.

Our system is broken. It needs to be fixed. We need to make sure that every home care job is a good job, that people want to work in home care, want to provide good-quality care, because there is no quality of care without continuity of care, and if you don't have continuity of caregivers, you don't have continuity of care and you don't have good-quality care. It's as simple as that. Had the minister taken a few minutes to do the difficult work of giving people a chance to be heard, I'm sure he would have heard about that and maybe had an opportunity to make things better. But no, the pent-up demand of people to have an opportunity to be heard was never listened to.

All of those people who are worried, who have questions, who have ideas for change that would make our system better don't have an opportunity to be heard because we never had consultations on medical assistance in dying. We have this bill, a very technical bill, that most people won't be able to understand, that won't answer their questions, that won't alleviate their fear, that won't give them the reassurance that they need in a time in their lives and the lives of their loved ones that is usually emotionally very loaded.

Death is not something we talk about every day and death is not something that people are comfortable or often even able to talk about, although we all should. So I'm sure we would have heard about in-home palliative care, the need to expand those services, so that we can respect the wishes of more patients who want to die at home, in the comfort of their own home.

1630

We would probably have heard about the need to train our health care workers so that they are able to offer palliative care. A lot of health care workers will tell you that they feel ill-equipped to have those conversations with their patients. They feel ill-equipped to be able to

manage the pain so that the persons can be comfortable at the end of life. They feel completely unprepared to have the conversation about medical assistance in dying because they were never consulted. They were never part of this conversation. They themselves, like everybody else in Ontario, are part of this pent-up demand of people who want to have a safe place to have a conversation about medical assistance in dying, but we never provided them that.

I'm sure we would have heard that they would like more training so that they can do a better job in providing palliative care, in providing end-of-life care, and being able to answer questions from people who are considering making use of medical assistance in dying.

If the minister had taken the time to listen, we would probably have also heard about the need to invest in research so that we know better about how to handle end-of-life, but none of that has been done.

When we talk about palliative sedation, here again, this is something that some people will request and most health care workers won't know exactly who is allowed—are they allowed to do this? How do they do this? Is it okay? All of those questions are left unanswered.

So, like everything else in health care, we will have to develop best practice. We will have to do all of this work. Unfortunately, all of this work will be done behind closed doors where the public never had an opportunity to be heard, where the public never had an opportunity to have their questions answered and never had an opportunity to be reassured that we have fallen on the right side of the law, that we will be able to protect the vulnerable, at the same time as we will be able to offer to people who seek medical assistance in dying this service, if they so wish.

Society's attitude towards death remains very taboo to this day. We, as leaders of this province, had a golden opportunity to show leadership, to create this safe place, but I will tell you that the Ministry of Health and the Minister of Health failed completely on that file, and we never had that opportunity.

We all know that aging and dying is a natural life process and must be accepted as part and parcel of the human condition. We have to learn to face that and be able to talk about it more openly with our loved ones. We must also be informed of what our rights are, such as the right to refuse treatment, the right to stop treatment and what it means to have an available plan for the end of life. We must ensure that the wishes that are expressed and medical directives are respected. All of this right now is pretty shaky in our health care system. It works some of the time, for some of the people, in some of the areas, but I would tell that you it does not work for a whole bunch of people, a whole bunch of times, in a whole bunch of areas—here again, an opportunity lost.

Medical assistance in dying seems to be consistent with the changes in our values, the changes in the law and the changes in medical practice, but we all know that we must do this in a way that does not harm society's

most vulnerable. This is feasible and doable. But it needs to be explained, it needs to be shared, and none of this is feasible right now.

I can tell you that at 3 o'clock or 4 o'clock in the afternoon, not too many people watch the Legislative Assembly channel, and I don't blame them. This should not be the only way that they get to hear about medical assistance in dying. There have to be more open ways to do this.

Unfortunately, we're seeing it playing out, and right now it's playing out in the media. I have a press clipping that comes from the Windsor Star. It's a very, very sad story. It talks about Hôtel-Dieu Grace hospital and their CEO, Janice Kaffer. Hôtel-Dieu Grace is a Catholic hospital that refused to perform medical assistance in dying, and then Windsor Regional Hospital refused to accept a transfer of patients who wanted to transfer to their hospital so that they would have access to medical assistance in dying.

Hôtel-Dieu Grace is the only hospital in Windsor that provides hospital-based palliative care, where most of the requests for medical assistance in dying are expected to come from, but its policy is to ask other hospitals—and the home care system, through the community care access centre—to accept patients who want medical assistance in dying.

However, the Windsor Regional administrator says that right now their hospital is too full. As of today—I'm going by memory—I think they had 52 people admitted with no beds, and about the same amount of alternate-level-of-care patients. The CCAC, the home care, says that they would have provided care in the patients' home if they could have been able to find a doctor to perform the procedure.

I'm not blaming any of them. All of them are right. What I'm blaming is: How come we have a Ministry of Health and a Minister of Health who did not foresee any of that happening? I did, and I'm sure most of the people in this House knew that with medical assistance in dying and the fact that this is such a polarized issue, there were going to be conflicts. But we did not provide any opportunity for those conflicts to be aired out so that a healthy middle ground could be found.

So what have we got? We've got bloggers at either end of the spectrum going at it. We have people on the front lines who are trying their best, not knowing exactly who's in the right and who's in the wrong. All of this could have been avoided if we had a Minister of Health who took the time to listen, who makes the difficult decisions to tackle issues such as medical assistance in dying. Yes, it is polarized. Yes, it is not an easy issue; we all agree. But shying away from difficult issues when you are the leader, when you are the Minister of Health, is not an option. Nobody else will do your job for you. You are the Minister of Health. You are the one who has to do those difficult tasks for the good of all of us.

But it is not done. Since June 2016, medical assistance in dying is available to the people of Ontario, and what we have to support this is a huge mess. What I read from

the Windsor Star I could have read from any other community hospital, because the same is playing out throughout. We have a minister who did not listen.

I can give an example from my riding where a fairly young man and his wife reached out to me because he wanted to have access to medical assistance in dying. His family physician also reached out to me. They had done the first assessment and found that this man qualified to receive medical assistance in dying.

1640

Part of the qualification is that you have to have two independent physicians or nurse practitioners do the assessment. So we tried to find a second physician to do the assessment. The first thing you do is that you phone this 1-800 number where physicians can self-identify that they are willing to participate in medical assistance in dying. Well, we did the phone call and found out that in all of the northeast region—so we're talking from the French River all the way to Timiskaming—Cochrane, all the way to the northern part of our province—there's not one single physician who has put his or her name forward.

So a second assessment was to be done via teleconference by a physician—I'm going by memory; I think the physician was in Windsor. The patient is in Sudbury. His family physician is in Sudbury, and the second assessment to decide if you are going to go through with medical assistance in dying is available through a video conference with somebody in Windsor. But all was for naught, because there is nobody in the northeast who has put their name forward for medical assistance in dying.

I'm telling you all this, Speaker, because this is not how our health care system should run. I know that medical assistance in dying is divisive. I know that it is not a conversation that is easy to have, but there are many things in health care that are not easy. That doesn't mean you don't do them. That means you roll up your sleeves, you find a way to be respectful and to have this safe place to talk about medical assistance in dying so that hospitals can have arrangements between themselves. Hospitals work together all the time. There are some procedures that are available in some hospitals but not in others—for very good reasons. But hospitals have put forward some referral patterns. They know who does what and when. They know who to call to arrange for a referral.

The same thing: Not every physician, not every nurse practitioner does the full scope of practice. Some will specialize in elder care; some will specialize with children; some will have a general practice focusing on athletes or whatever else. But you have a safe place to have conversations so that they can work those things out, the referral pattern, between themselves so that the system works. But our Ministry of Health decided to shy away from all of this, so we've never had a safe place in Ontario to have those talks. It just doesn't work.

It's not the only file for which the Minister of Health doesn't listen. I have a letter here from the Ontario

Hospital Association. They wrote to the Minister of Health last month to say:

"In recent months, ED wait times have been the longest on record since Ontario started measuring wait times nine years ago. Wait times for patients waiting to be admitted to hospital from the ED increased 13% from this time last year....

"Currently, the number of patients waiting in Ontario hospitals for care in a more appropriate setting ... is also on the rise.... This is a challenge that is growing, increasing 12% over the last year....

"In September, the OHA distributed a survey to our members to better understand unused bed and space capacity. The results were shared with the ministry to determine how quickly hospitals could open unused beds/space, with additional funding, to help mitigate any potential growth in ALC patients."

It's not like the people in the field do not let the minister know what is going on. It's more that we have a minister who is not always willing to listen to what is going on.

I have a couple of letters, in no particular order, from nurse practitioners. This one is from Anthony Galic. Anthony works at the Capreol Nurse Practitioner-Led Clinic, which is in my riding. He basically says, Minister, that "we need to let you know our frustration in what we are being paid and that you need to invest in interprofessional primary care teams.

"We know that your government wants to balance Ontario's budget by 2017-18. We also know that health care is one of the most important provincial services that Ontarians rely on, and that your government has committed to expanding patients' access to primary care.

"As you know, some of us just received a small increase in our compensation in 2016-17 but this still leaves us at rates below what was recommended in 2012. This is about fairness and equity. It is 2017 and we are being left behind our colleagues in other parts of the health system....

"So I am asking to you to follow through on your government's commitment to primary care and to putting patients first by investing in interprofessional primary health care teams in the 2017 Ontario budget. This investment will help address recruitment and retention challenges, build strong interprofessional primary care teams and ensure high-quality, people-centred primary health care delivery...."

You have to realize, Speaker, that those same nurse practitioners, who have not seen a raise worth mentioning for the last eight years, are now expected to provide medical assistance in dying. They will soon be given the right to prescribe narcotics and other controlled substances. And yet, although their scope of practice has exploded, their salaries haven't changed in eight years.

I have another letter, this time from Amanda Rainville. Amanda Rainville also happens to be from the Capreol Nurse Practitioner-Led Clinic. She goes on to say:

"Dear Premier and ministers:

"I work in an interprofessional primary health care team. We are committed to working with you to implement Patients First but to do that, we need to let you know our frustration in what we are being paid and that you need to invest in interprofessional primary care teams."

"Over the years, I've seen a number of my colleagues leaving jobs they love to take higher-paying jobs in other parts of the health system. This is not only disruptive for the people we serve; it also takes time to recruit and train new people. This distracts our entire team from providing care and services to the people, their families and our communities we serve. We have had staff members leave in previous years for higher-paying jobs and it is very disruptive to our patients. They learn to trust their providers and when one leaves, they are transferred to a new provider and must try to learn to trust a new individual. It is also extremely taxing on the team as they try to continue to provide services while being short-staffed, sometimes for more than a year at a time. While we are currently at full complement of staff, we have nurse practitioners who have children who will be entering post-secondary education within the next few years and they are considering leaving their job in primary care for jobs in higher-paying sectors."

She's also asking the minister and the Premier "to follow through on your government's commitment to primary care and to putting patients first by investing in interprofessional" primary care.

This is from Amanda Rainville. She is a nurse practitioner and the clinic director at the Capreol Nurse Practitioner-Led Clinic.

I'll read one last letter into the record, and this is from Julie Lemieux. Julie is the board president of the French River Nurse Practitioner-Led Clinic, also in my riding. It goes:

"Dear Minister Hoskins....

"We appreciate that the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care acknowledged the hard work and value of these dedicated health care professionals. The announcement of \$85 million for recruitment and retention increases for interdisciplinary primary care organizations was received with great anticipation by our interprofessional team who had not received an increase in wages in seven years.

1650

"However, learning that this increase was actually only \$31.5 million was disappointing. Presently our staff are disillusioned and discouraged. We are very conscious of the fiscal realities of our health care system and fully support system transformation; nevertheless, this increase is inadequate, creating inequity and unfairness among health sectors.

"We believe that primary care will play a key role in the planned transformation sought out by Patients First. To best serve our medically and socially complex community, the French River" Nurse Practitioner-Led Clinic "needs just, equitable and significant financial resources.

"We therefore respectfully ask that you reconsider your 2016-17 recruitment and retention funding plan."

For some of them, it had meant that after seven to eight years of no budget increases, they would get a 17-cent increase. For others, it was a 28-cent increase. That was received as an insult.

You have to realize, Speaker, that when we talk about health care, health care is not a widget that you buy someplace; health care is provided by people. It's provided when there's a relationship between the care provider and a patient. For that relationship to work, there needs to be trust; there needs to be comfort. There needs to be open dialogue between those two.

Right now in Ontario, there's a good chance that there's a patient who is having a discussion with their care provider—either their nurse practitioner or physician—and they're asking for medical assistance in dying. The care provider at the other end will know very little about it, more than likely, because nothing has been shared by this ministry. They will try the 1-800 number that they are supposed to call, to see if somebody will provide medical assistance in dying. If they come from northeastern Ontario, they will be told that for all of northeastern Ontario there are zero physicians available to help you with medical assistance in dying.

All of this could have been so, so different. All of this we have seen coming for such a long time. Just look at the cases that have wound their way through the courts because people have tried to gain access to medical assistance in dying—some of them right here in Ontario.

We have seen the Supreme Court giving orders, saying that the Criminal Code had to be changed so that medical assistance in dying would not be taken as a breach of the Criminal Code and would be a legal medical practice in all of Canada, including Ontario. We have had months and years to get ready, and how did we use those months and years to get ready? By doing nothing.

All of those people who have something to say, who have an opinion, who have a question, who have a worry, who want to be heard, are now stuck in a polarized discussion, where you have people on one end who want medical assistance in dying at all costs and people at the other end who do not want this to be there in Ontario. It doesn't matter that the laws have changed; it doesn't matter—for them. They have not been part of this, and they still have unanswered questions. They still want an opportunity to be heard. I'm just wondering—like those nurse practitioners speaking to the minister and not getting any answers back, like all of those Ontarians who want an opportunity to be heard on medical assistance in dying, right now, they are being let down.

I see that the time is running out.

Mr. John Yakabuski: We'd be prepared to give you more. This has been riveting.

M^{me} France Gélinas: Merci.

Le projet de loi 84 est un projet de loi qui parle de l'aide à mourir—de l'assistance médicale à mourir. C'est un sujet qui a fait l'actualité en Ontario et partout au

Canada pendant des années. C'est un sujet auquel plusieurs Ontariens et Ontariennes s'intéressent. Ils voudraient avoir la chance d'être entendus. Ils voudraient avoir la chance de poser des questions à quelqu'un qui peut leur répondre, et ils voudraient avoir la chance de faire partie d'un dialogue. Mais qu'est-ce qu'on a en ce moment? On a un « vacuum ». Il n'y a aucune place sécuritaire—

Interjections.

Mr. Randy Hillier: Stop the clock.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): I'll make that decision. Thank you. And we had about nine conversations going on. I couldn't even hear the person speaking. If you want to have group discussions, you can go outside and do it. Thanks.

Continue.

M^{me} France Gélinas: En ce moment, c'est un sujet qui intéresse beaucoup de personnes, mais malheureusement il n'y a aucune place sécuritaire pour avoir ce genre de discussion. On a des gens en Ontario qui voudraient que la procédure soit disponible de façon beaucoup plus ouverte, à une extrémité, puis on a des gens qui s'y opposent pour de très bonnes raisons, à l'autre extrémité. On n'a aucune chance d'avoir une discussion où on trouve : est-ce qu'il y a des terrains d'entente? Est-ce qu'il y a des choses qu'on pourrait faire ensemble? On s'attendait à ce que le ministre de la Santé donne une opportunité d'avoir un terrain neutre, un terrain sécuritaire, pour avoir ces conversations-là, mais on ne l'a jamais eue.

Ce qu'on a eu, c'est le projet de loi 84 qui change certaines choses dans les lois pour s'assurer que, dans un premier temps, un médecin, ou une infirmière ou infirmier praticiens, qui offre l'aide à mourir ne sera pas amené en cour, et pour s'assurer que si quelqu'un demande l'aide à mourir, on ne lui enlèvera pas ses primes d'assurance pour son assurance-vie ou son assurance invalidité, etc., pour sa famille et ses descendants. On fait des petits changements qui ont rapport avec le coroner pour que chaque fois qu'une personne demande l'aide à mourir, le coroner en soit informé. Dans deux ans d'ici, on fera un sommaire des personnes qui ont demandé l'aide à mourir. On change la loi sur l'accès à l'information pour que les gens et les lieux où l'aide à mourir est disponible ne soient pas quelque chose qui peut être demandé sous la loi sur l'accès à l'information. C'est tout ce que le ministre de la Santé fait avec ce projet de loi.

La grande discussion communautaire, le besoin d'avoir une discussion à la grandeur de la province sur ce sujet-là, n'a jamais eu lieu. Je peux vous dire que nos voisins de l'est, les Québécois, ont pris une démarche complètement différente. À partir de 2009, ils ont commencé à écouter les experts. Ils ont mis de l'avant un document de discussion auquel tout le monde pouvait avoir accès. Ils ont tenu des consultations. Ils ont fait un rapport final, encore auquel tout le monde pouvait avoir accès. Donc, au Québec, les gens savent à quoi s'attendre, comment ça marche, et ils ont un système en place qui a été développé pour respecter chacun.

En Ontario, on n'a rien de ça. Qu'est-ce qu'on a? On a des chicanes d'hôpital qui font les manchettes dans différentes localités. J'ai parlé de celui de Windsor. Les hôpitaux de Windsor n'ont rien fait de mal; ils n'ont juste jamais eu l'occasion d'être entendus.

The minister dropped the ball on that one. He had a hard conversation that people needed to be heard, and he failed us.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Questions and comments?

Mr. John Fraser: It's a pleasure to respond to the member from Nickel Belt, although I have to say that facts matter.

1700

Last winter, we undertook a consultation online through Ipsos and focus groups. There were meetings in Ottawa and Toronto. In her own community, at the hospital, they had two community consultations, which weren't run by the government, that had over 500 people there each time. I went out on a consultation on palliative care in 16 different meetings with 350 different people. I was in many communities talking to people outside of those consultations.

Medical assistance in dying came up twice during that time, so it was interesting, the connection. But I do agree that it's something we have to talk about, and that's advance care planning. I think it's incumbent on all of us to find a way to get that message out in our community, to have that conversation. This should be out in the open, but it's all of our responsibility. It's not just one responsibility over here, because this happens to all of us. We're all going there. Every day we get a little bit closer.

I know the member opposite's commitment to health care, and I applaud her for that. I think it's really unfair to say what she just said about consultation. You can say a lot of things. There is a lot of work to do; there's no question about that. I know. I've undertaken some of that work for hospices. We are working hard in Sudbury to expand palliative care services there, to expand hospice services across the northeast.

If any one person says, "I've got the answer to all of this, and I can fix it tomorrow morning," please come over here, because I'd like to hear it. I just want you to know that there's work that's being done—okay?—to improve palliative care in this province. We all know that. We're all working towards that.

This bill very specifically identifies risks for people out there in medical assistance in dying, and that's why the bill is in front of us now.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Questions and comments?

Mr. Jim McDonell: I'm proud to rise on behalf of my constituents to respond to the thoughtful conversations on this bill. It certainly is an issue I'm hearing about in my own riding, and it takes us to a different place than we've been before. We want to make sure that the practitioners' beliefs are included in the legislation, their conscience rights, so they can withdraw if they need to.

But I guess it speaks of a system we hope we aren't getting to, where patients are worried about being able to

afford some of the health care costs, and whether they're a burden on society. We want to make sure that's not one of the issues around this. I know that when we talk about some of the cuts, some of the programs that are out there are not what they used to be. People are looking at it and wondering if that's what they want to put up with for any period of time. Our health care system must be designed so that people don't get the feeling that, first of all, they are a burden to society. Generally as you age, you've contributed much to this country and you have much to be proud of. Don't look at it as if you should take it on to be saving money.

The other thing, as well, is that we want to make sure that our health care system is designed so people can have some hope that for some of the issues they might have there is actually a solution and the money there to actually create some of the solutions. I'm hearing that just today there was someone down in St. Louis looking for health care, and the government has finally agreed to cover those costs. Those are real problems, when people are looking at facing the time ahead.

Anyway, I look forward to further discussion on this bill.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Questions and comments?

Ms. Jennifer K. French: I'm glad to be able to stand up and make a few comments in response to our critic for health care's one-hour lead on Bill 84, on medical assistance in dying. This is, as she put it, a conversation we've all known is coming. We've watched the conversations play out at the federal level and across our communities, and we know that it is a very personal and a very passionate conversation. It is a daunting conversation, because it is so emotional, and yet we know that as we are all dying, this is something that affects all of us. We all have loved ones, and it's a conversation that we shouldn't shy away from.

Everyone wants to know their options when it comes to health care, when it comes to home care. They want to be clear on their rights. They want to be clear on their rights. They want to be clear on the information that's out there.

Here we have a bill that changes five other acts, and many people are going to have questions and they're going to want to know what this will mean for them, for their loved ones, for their ability to access medical assistance in dying. I think, as she had put out there, having conversations at the local level, with your local MPP, is different than having that broad conversation. I think that's one that will come from what we're doing here, but I know that we're all going to hear it in our community offices. While those are going to be challenging conversations, as I know we all are aware, they have to be had.

I remember going through the palliative care channels with my mother at home, and I've spoken to different members about that. It's a very emotional process. To know what the options are going to be is such an important piece for people to be aware of. Hopefully, this is starting the conversation that we should be having.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Questions and comments?

M. Shafiq Qaadri: J'ai le plaisir et aussi la responsabilité de parler de ce projet de loi 84, l'aide à mourir.

Speaker, as you can imagine, as a physician as well as a parliamentarian, I come with hopefully some added experience and perspective on this particular bill. I would, of course, salute my honourable colleague from Nickel Belt, who, as you will know, is a nurse by profession, for her detailed—

Interjection.

Mr. Shafiq Qaadri: Physiotherapist. Thank you, Speaker. A physiotherapist, an allied health professional in the ancillary mode, so I salute her in any case—the salute still stands—for her thoughtful and measured approach. But I have to say that this is, of course, as you can imagine, an extremely delicate area.

I would like to, first of all, use this podium for a moment to alert my medical colleagues and nurse practitioner colleagues that should they object or have any hesitations about offering assisted dying, there is a pathway for them as well. For example, we receive a lot of questions not only through constituents but also, for example, medical colleagues who might contact me: Will they be actually physically and medically required to provide this service?

It's a similar situation to other services where physicians may refer patients, for example, with regard to things like abortion and of course palliative care and many other things. The idea simply is that, to uphold the professional standards as of course addressed by the College of Physicians and Surgeons, the Registered Nurses' Association and the College of Pharmacists, if an individual is uncomfortable for whatever reason—don't ask, don't tell; no questions asked—they are still medically obligated to offer the referral service. It's not a time, for example, to moralize or to browbeat or try to talk people out of it. But there are pathways.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): The member from Nickel Belt has two minutes.

M^{me} France Gélinas: I'd like to thank the members from Ottawa South, Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry, my colleague from Oshawa and the member from Etobicoke North for their comments. I realize that spending an hour on a Wednesday afternoon talking about dying is probably not something you do every week, but it's something that needed to be done.

We have this bill in front of us that talks about medical assistance in dying. There are still a lot of questions out there. What are the pathways for effective referral? What if a physician is opposed to medical assistance in dying and one of his or her patients comes and asks, "What are those pathways?" And if you do have such a client and phone the 1-800 number and it happens to be in the northeast, it doesn't work; they are still on the ground. The system does not work. It has not been thought out. It has not been fleshed out so that it does what it is supposed to do.

You layer that on the fact that dying is a very difficult conversation to be had, and medical assistance in dying is polarized further and further apart. We have the perfect storm here where a lot of people in Ontario have an opinion—most of them at either end, very few in the middle. We have the health care professionals who don't know how this will work. Either they want to offer the service or they are opposed to offering the service or opposed to having to do an effective referral, and nobody knows how it will work. A 1-800 number that is not helpful and then a bill that comes forward that does not answer any of those questions: That's the perfect storm.

1710

ROYAL ASSENT
SANCTION ROYALE

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): At this time, I beg to inform the House that, in the name of Her Majesty the Queen, Her Honour the Lieutenant Governor has been pleased to assent to a certain bill in her office.

The Deputy Clerk (Mr. Trevor Day): The following is the title of the bill to which Her Honour did assent:

An Act to amend the Ontario Energy Board Act, 1998 / Loi modifiant la Loi de 1998 sur la Commission de l'énergie de l'Ontario.

MEDICAL ASSISTANCE IN DYING
STATUTE LAW AMENDMENT ACT, 2017
LOI DE 2017 MODIFIANT DES LOIS
EN CE QUI CONCERNE L'AIDE
MÉDICALE À MOURIR

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Further debate?

Hon. Kevin Daniel Flynn: It's a pleasure to join the debate, and it's great to see you back in the chair again. It's great to see all the members back after spending some time in our ridings.

It's really interesting to come back to Bill 84. I want to thank the Minister of Health for bringing this forward before the House, so that we can give it the important debate that an issue of this importance deserves.

When you look at the human condition or you look at the journey of life, I think we've had a much easier time talking about the beginning of life and birth than we have having a talk about what happens at the other end of life. This is a very, very difficult conversation for, I think, an awful lot of people in our society. It is usually accompanied with regret, with sadness, with all those things that go along with losing a loved one.

So it shouldn't be really any surprise to anybody in the House that this debate has been a long time coming. I think, somewhere in the back of all our minds, when we've been through the experience of a loss of a loved one—some people die fairly quietly and painlessly; others suffer in their death. Many of us in this House have had the occasion to watch that happen and secretly

have thought, or maybe discussed even with other people, that perhaps there's a better way of allowing this to happen, and perhaps this is something we need to talk about more.

I think, when you deal with an issue like Bill 84, the medical assistance in dying, the more conversation you have about it, the more debate you have about it, the more opinions you let in, the more sunshine you let in, the easier the conversation becomes, because we all got here through a birth, but we're all going out pretty much the same way. If we can assist each other in that regard, I think that's what being a good human being is all about. I think it really transcends political, cultural, ideological situations, where we're able to assist each other in this way.

As I said, it shouldn't be any surprise that this has been a long time coming. But I think we should all take some pride in this House, all three parties and the staff who have done an awful lot of work in preparing this and the consultations that took place around the province and the people who came out to those consultations. I think we should all take some pride that we've been able to wrap our hands around this and we're able to have a serious and sober debate in the House, and to see if there's not a better way, to see if what the medical community has been telling us that perhaps they could do is something that actually can be put into legislation.

I think what we have before us is a very good framework that has had an awful lot of consultation attached to it, a lot of input and a lot of very serious thought, and it allows us to move forward on a debate on a very serious issue. I'm hopeful, as the bill winds its way through the process that we have here at the House, if it needs amendment, if it needs things to improve it along the way, whatever it needs to make it a better bill, whatever debate needs to take place—whatever individuals may have to appear on this bill before committee, I hope that they'll feel that it will be a welcome process and that their thoughts will be taken into account and their opinions will be taken into account.

The legislation: It's a very human bill, but it has some technicalities attached to it. Obviously, when you look at medical assistance in dying, it brings in the health care system and it brings in what our health care professionals do for us to keep us alive. When you bring in something like this, when you ask them to do something that I don't think any of us are looking forward to, when you ask them to assist in that, it's a special person who is able to do that. It's a special person, like our previous speaker and others in the health care field who are able to work in that environment, to deal with that loss on a daily basis and to help people probably at the time they need it the most.

So it's great to see it here. It's great to hear the opinions that we're hearing from other people on this bill—especially from the health professionals themselves, because they're the people who obviously are wondering about the legislation. They're wondering about the liability attached to this. I believe that they do

want to help. Often, they're concerned with their own privacy; they're concerned with their own confidentiality. Obviously, when you're involving the regulated professions, you bring in the colleges; you bring in the conduct that's expected of these folks, in order to ensure that they've got the right guidance as to how we would like this to proceed.

We need to support our health care professionals—because I think we've gotten to a point where we're having that debate that a lot of us thought may never happen, because it was too difficult an issue. But it really doesn't go anywhere unless we support the health care professionals who are going to help us through this. They're going to be the people we lean on, or that the people who are caring for us may lean on, at some point in the future when we find ourselves approaching the ends of our own lives.

I know this also brings up some moral dilemmas for some people, Speaker. Certainly, some people have some very strongly held views about life itself—when it should be protected and when, perhaps, we should be looking at it differently. The idea here, I think, is to allow those people who want to help those people who see this on a daily basis and think they can bring their own professional conduct, their own professional skills, to make something very, very difficult—to ease the suffering of somebody who's going through something like this. But there are other people, who I think are very good health care professionals, who probably can't see themselves participating in this. Something inside them—a personally held belief, the morals they have themselves—would not allow them to do this. I don't think there's any intent to force anybody into this, to say that somehow you can't be a health care professional unless you're an active part of Bill 84; the idea is not to do that at all. But what we do expect is a level of care for people in the province of Ontario. The respective regulatory colleges themselves, I know, will assist us in that regard, in ensuring that their own members are monitored. Those colleges may, in the fullness of time or perhaps even in the short term, establish policies and guidelines that will assist their own members to ensure that this new element of being a health care professional is accompanied by the same type of discipline that has been applied to the health care profession in the past.

We're continuing to work; we're continuing to monitor what's going on in other jurisdictions. If you look around the world, depending on your point of view on this issue, you may find that other jurisdictions have perhaps got out a little bit ahead of this, have understood the need a little earlier than we did and have implemented some processes in their own jurisdictions, countries or states, that appear to be working and appear to be in line with the social mores of that particular jurisdiction.

Here at the provincial level of government, obviously being part of a confederation, we're working with the federal level, as well. They've been taking this issue on, and have provided us, I think, with a very good frame-

work that's really designed to recognize the individual choice of medically assisted death for adults who are just suffering to a point where it's intolerable, where they've just gotten to that point where they are choosing to not take any more. That's a situation I do not wish upon anybody in this House or anybody outside this House. But the fact of the matter is that we all know it does happen; that the suffering that often accompanies illness around the end of life, the pain that accompanies that when the pain medication starts to not work the way it did in the past—there are some decisions to be made. We want to make sure that those decisions are made in a way that the people who are making the decisions are making them at a time when they're lucid, when they're able to think it through themselves. It's tough to imagine yourself in that situation. I don't think you can imagine yourself in that situation until you find yourself in that situation.

I look forward to the debate continuing. I look forward to hearing other people's opinions on Bill 84. I'm certainly hearing it in my own community, Speaker, a variety of opinions, but, Oakville being Oakville, very reasonable opinions. Everybody puts their thoughts forward in a very constructive way.

1720

The idea, I think, at the end of the day, is that what Bill 84 will do is contribute to a more dignified society, to a health care system that fully realizes that we come in one way and we all go out the same way, or we all go to the same place perhaps, but we go out different ways. Sometimes that passage is very painful. Sometimes that passage just gets to the point where the individual wants to make the choice about their own life themselves.

Bill 84, with the support of this House and whatever improvements will be made to it along the way, I think is just going to make our society a better place.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Questions and comments?

Ms. Sylvia Jones: I'm glad the minister has participated in this debate, because there are few issues that are going to have more long-term implications than making sure we get medical assistance in dying right.

We have a federal government directing each of the provinces, and you can see, as Quebec and as different provinces come online, they're all tweaking it a little bit differently. I think with Bill 84, we've chosen to deal with some of the easier things. When you're talking about protecting individuals and their insurance and their WSIB, it's all very important and factors that have to be considered when we are studying medical assistance in dying, but it is just one piece of the pie.

While I'm pleased that Bill 84 is here and that we're moving ahead and coming forward with some suggestions on how to make this system work—which is frankly very new; it's a good start—to quote the previous speaker, the health critic from the NDP, it is by no means the completion of the entire project surrounding MAID, medical assistance in dying.

So I'm happy to participate, ongoing, in conversations on how it can be improved, how it needs to be improved,

and I hope that those opportunities for amendments and debates continue.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Questions and comments?

Mr. Wayne Gates: I appreciate you giving me a few minutes to talk to you, but I want to talk directly to the Minister of Labour because, as we're going to ask workers to expand their scope on medically assisted dying, I'm saying to the minister that the dollars that are going to health care is the real problem. The issue is how you're going to divide the pie to make sure that the workers are getting the proper training they need, the proper education they need.

But in the province of Ontario, what we do is that we give this pot of gold, the money, to the LHINs, and what the LHINs do is they run their organization. They take the health care dollars out—and I'm talking to the minister because I want him to hear this. They take their dollars out, and then they give it to CACCs and they run their organizations, all their executives and all that kind of stuff. Not one penny of those two steps of the pie has gone to front-line workers. And to make it worse, Mr. Speaker—I know this happens in your community as well—you then contract it out to another company called CarePartners, who then take their money; I think last year it was \$700 million that they made.

Now, in all those three steps, not one penny has been spent on front-line workers; not one penny has been spent on training; not one penny has been spent on, "We're going to expand the scope of your work."

Then, do you know what else they do? Once they privatize it and give it to CarePartners, they pay them \$15, \$16 an hour. They don't pay them for their first visit, and then, when they come to them to try to get a raise, guess what they do? They put them on strike and use scabs or replacement workers.

So if we're going to talk about expanding people's scope and caring about how we're going to die with dignity, we've got to make sure that we're giving the dollars to the right people, and the right people are our front-line workers and certainly not corporations that are making money on the backs of us.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): The member from Ottawa South.

Mr. John Fraser: It's a pleasure to respond to the Minister of Labour.

I do want to say to the member from Niagara Falls that I know that the money that's being invested in assisted dying right now is being spent effectively in terms of training and setting up networks.

We have to realize that this is something, although expected, that is new to us. This is eight months old in actually happening, and less than a year and a half old in terms of when we knew this decision was coming forward. In the eight months since the legislation was passed, 187 people have chosen that in Ontario.

There's a lot of work to be done to make sure that this is working. It's working very well in many, many communities. There are still challenges. It's new.

As I said earlier in debate, we don't have proximity to this. This is something that's going to evolve: our understanding, how we work together, talking to people about it. I agree with the member from Nickel Belt that the more we talk about it, the better. There are broader discussions beyond just medically assisted dying that connect, and those are palliative end-of-life care and how we give to the people who are our substitute decision-makers—often the people who we love—the information that they need when they have to make a decision for us. Like I said, we don't think about this. We don't think about it until it's right on us, and then we're not ready. It's important that we go back to these conversations.

I'm glad we're having this debate. I look forward to the rest of the debate and would encourage members, all members, to talk about this in your community. It's not easy to talk about. I'm sure many, many members do, and you have leadership in your community that wants to do that, so if you can aid and assist in that regard, I think that would be a very good thing.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Questions and comments?

Mr. Victor Fedeli: Thank you very much, Speaker, for the opportunity to have a couple of minutes to weigh in on this important topic as well.

I'm really looking forward to continuing to have conversations at home, in my constituency office, to find out more as people are starting to hear more about the level and depth of this bill, and to hear more of what my constituents have to say.

I know that there's a path forward. Other provinces have found a path forward. I think that there's legislation that respects the patient's wishes while still recognizing conscience rights as well. I know we're going to have plenty more conversations about that. I know that while we're still working on the details, we will be proposing an amendment to the legislation that will help protect the conscience rights.

I do look forward to getting back to Nipissing and travelling the riding, especially this weekend, and letting the people in our community know that we're talking about this issue.

It is a sensitive issue. It's one of those issues that they're not sure they want to hear you talking about. As I think has been said by many people, this is not something that we're all going to be able to avoid. The end is inevitable for all of us, so to be able to have an opportunity to discuss that, I think, is very, very important. I think it's a mature discussion in the Legislature to have. It is non-partisan. This isn't a political debate. It's a really important discussion. So I'm pleased to see that we're having a civil tone and a civil discussion about such a sensitive topic.

Again, I look forward to going home to my home in Corbeil and my riding of Nipissing and hearing from my constituents.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): The Minister of Labour has two minutes.

Hon. Kevin Daniel Flynn: I want to thank the members from Dufferin–Caledon, from Niagara Falls and

from Ottawa South, and the last speaker, the member from Nipissing, for contributing to the debate today.

I think the previous speaker hit the nail on the head when he said it has been a civil debate, or he hopes it will be a civil debate, because I think it's one of those issues that certainly begs the most respect we can give to it.

Certainly, there will be some very strongly held opinions, I would imagine, on this bill, because it strikes to the very heart of what life is all about. It strikes right to the heart, I think, of the human condition, and it strikes at the heart, obviously, of what happens at the end of that life.

1730

It's a very complex bill as well because it brings in so many elements. It's one thing to say that it's called medical assistance in dying, but it brings into account—obviously, we've talked at some length about the implications to our health care system and the people who do an excellent job in the province of Ontario in ensuring that they provide high-quality health care. But it also brings in some things like estate planning. It brings in insurance. It brings in the rights of people to make their own decisions. It brings in the concept of other people making your decisions for you as well. All those things that accompany the passage of life will be involved in Bill 84, and the nature of the discussion is going to be that there may be some differences. The challenge is going to be this House agreeing and coming to a consensus, going through the committee process, hearing from our own communities, hearing from people from other communities who travel to Toronto—or, if the bill travels, from a place in their own community—to express their opinions on a bill, as I said, that's been a long time coming but that is very, very important.

I look forward to the debate, Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Further debate.

Mr. Randy Hillier: I've been listening this afternoon to all the speakers. It has been a pleasure to see the civility in the debate, in the discussion. I will have to mention that I hope the Minister of Labour, after hearing his comments about working constructively and listening to conversations and having a deeper understanding that everybody will work together and that the committee will be looking at amendments, giving us the impression that the government is indeed open to amendments on Bill 84—because, of course, Speaker—you know this; you've been on many committees—as a rule, the government is not open to amendments during the committee process. I know it's unconventional for a minister to be at committee, but maybe the Minister of Labour will be at the committee hearings on Bill 84.

There were also some interesting comments from the Minister of Labour. I'm glad that he raised these subjects in his debate, where he spoke about the need to support our health care professionals, as well as recognizing that there can be a moral dilemma for people who are charged or expected to provide medical assistance in dying. Why

I mention that—that's one of the places where the bill is lacking, in our regard.

I'll take you back as well: During the debate this afternoon, many members of the Liberal benches recognized that we're expanding the scope of health care workers, of health care professionals, and we're doing that expansion of scope without putting any obligation on the colleges, such as the College of Physicians and Surgeons, or other regulatory bodies to recognize the expanded scope that we're doing with Bill 84. So I think we do have a bit of an example of the cart being in front of the horse. I'm glad the Liberal members have recognized it. I'm just surprised that the Minister of Health hasn't already received assurances from the regulatory bodies that there will be amendments to their practices and their codes so that they, as well, will recognize that there can be a moral dilemma, that there can be people that might not be well suited to do this expanded scope.

The member from Etobicoke North did mention that there is a referral mechanism, but I'm sure he's also well aware that the effective referral mechanism is a contentious component. There are still many in the health care profession who see—and, I think, rightly so—that effective referral still puts them in a significant moral dilemma.

I will say on Bill 84 that there are improvements. I think that overall there is much in the bill that we can be supportive of and recognize. It does provide clarity and protection for health care professionals, and their organizations, who are involved in providing medical assistance in dying.

We also know that the process of applying any mechanism that assists people in dying is going to be troublesome, and it is going to be problematic. Every example is going to be very profound, very unique, requiring significant thoughtfulness and empathy, so we need to have this legislation to provide some level of flexibility, to recognize those unique circumstances.

I also want to say this: We see on the first page of the bill that there is a recognition that the government creates an obligation upon the government to create a process to review the Coroners Act within two years. I applaud them on that. However, I am perplexed that they're not looking at having a process to review all the aspects of this bill in a timely fashion. As much as we might like to think that we get things right in the Legislature, I think that with this subject especially, we should look down the road a little bit and say, "We're into new waters here, and we had better put a process in place that we can look at and measure and see how effective or not effective, or how difficult or troublesome, it may be." I do think that would be another consideration during the committee process, if the Minister of Labour is in the committee, that he will be supportive of.

But I do also want to go back to this effective referral for a few moments. We know that our highest law in the land is our Constitution, and part of our Constitution is our Charter of Rights and Freedoms, which guarantees that fundamental right to freedom of conscience.

Requesting somebody to be involved in and to conduct themselves in a moral dilemma, in something that is unconscionable to them—we need to look more deeply at this. I would really encourage the government to ensure that the regulatory bodies get this right, on effective referral.

Again, I'll go back to the Minister of Labour. I think his comment was that there is no intent to make people do things that they would find unconscionable.

1740

It's not a matter of intent; it's a matter of the law. Intention doesn't count in law. It's the words that are in the legislation and the words in the regulations. It's in the words in the regulations of the colleges. It's not a matter that a member of the Liberal bench or a member on this side has a belief or an intention. When it comes down to it, it's: What does the law say?

I really encourage the government to get the words right on this one and to ensure that there's a mechanism that it can be reviewed in a timely process down the road.

It's also been brought up this afternoon by many people—that is, the broader discussion of dying in dignity and the need to do more in our health care services. Nobody will disagree that any member of this Legislature will have dealt with cases where constituents who have felt trapped in bureaucracy or trapped in not being able to get medical services, trapped in lengthy wait times for long-term-care facilities, rooms.

I was speaking with people from the dementia society a week ago, and it was astonishing to me that these people came into my office and shared this story with me that they had no effective referral—the words “effective referral” come up again—to a memory clinic. There are three memory clinics in my riding. However, unless their family physician was part of that family health team or that roster, they couldn't go to the memory clinic. You know, just a small, little item, but here are people advancing in age, having health care difficulties, and the system absolutely was a problem for them just to get to a memory clinic.

I think, as many have mentioned today, it's great to see a civil conversation, a thoughtful conversation and a non-partisan conversation about medical assistance in dying. I wish we could say the same thing and have the same conversation on medical assistance in living in this province. Wouldn't that be profound, Speaker, that this conversation, in this manner, was being conducted about improving health care services, medical assistance in living? But we know it's often—not often; I would say it always falls into a partisan discussion, very fruitless and not very productive. I'm not blaming one side or the other here on this. It's part of our system, I guess, but that's not to say that we can't change. It's not to say that we can't recognize some of the inherent flaws in our debate.

I encourage the member from Ottawa South, along with many others—and he's engaged in a lot of discussions in health. I welcome his discussions—very thoughtful. Let's advance that. Let's move that profound,

good discussion about how we're going to end that lengthy, lengthy wait time for people to get long-term-care rooms. Let's see if we can help those people who have dementia to get into a memory clinic.

We see this all the time. There was a question in the House this week about Madison. There was, of course, a long, troublesome problem with the mayor of Trent Hills. It's an ongoing thing. Those are the ones that—they're the tip of the iceberg. They're the ones that get the media attention. But there's many, many—far more, Speaker, who are never seen. They don't make the front pages of the Toronto Star or the Ottawa Citizen, but they're suffering; they're hurting. They're seeking help and assistance from their government and from our agencies, our publicly funded agencies, but often find not help but obstruction and problems.

So I do want to commend everybody for the discussions on Bill 84 today. I do want to reiterate and emphasize the need to recognize the moral dilemma that health care professionals will face, that we do have a proper mechanism in place to alleviate that moral dilemma or allow them to step away from that moral dilemma and not compel them to do things that they would find morally objectionable. I think that goes hand in hand—we know we need to protect the rights of patients, absolutely. We also have to protect the rights of health care professionals. They're not exclusive from one another. To do one, we must do both.

Any law that does not permit people to act in a manner that is consistent with their deeply held moral convictions is a law that is based on an injustice. The law must permit people to act with their deeply held moral convictions, not to act contrary to them.

Speaker, I do look forward to committee, when this does come to committee. I do look forward to measuring the performance of committee with the words that were stated in this House by the Minister of Labour and by others. I will encourage them to act in committee in the same fashion as the words that they have conveyed in the House today: to be thoughtful, and to be accepting of amendments, of further and deeper discussions. And should they not, I'll speak out. But I do hope that they remember those words and they're not forgotten when this bill gets to committee.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Questions and comments.

Ms. Jennifer K. French: I'm glad to add my two minutes and my two cents to the remarks from the member from Lanark-Frontenac-Lennox and Addington.

I really appreciate being here today and being part of what the member called a profound and good discussion. I appreciated the line about, wouldn't it be something if we had these kinds of profound and good discussions about medical assistance in living? I don't think that point is lost. But here we are, and we are having an important conversation, one that is delicate, one that is personal. I appreciate some of the points that he made, because this is a conversation that I think is going to stretch us to think in uncomfortable directions.

1750

As he said, our Constitution and charter guarantee the right of freedom of conscience, and I think that is something that we always keep at the forefront of our minds, and we need to when it comes to creating new laws. I like the idea of measuring and seeing how effective or not any of the laws that we put into action are, re-evaluating to see how it is unfolding, especially when it is something, in this case, so divisive, but so personal, with such significant ramifications.

I like being a part of the conversation. I would also like to add—well, that I don't know that my thoughts in this regard would be profound or good, but they are personal. This is a personal conversation with myself. When we're talking about medical assistance in dying, I may have my own opinions. Watching my mother pass, while it was not a prolonged illness, what would my opinions have been were it to have been prolonged? What would her thoughts have been?

My neighbour and I were trying to have this conversation and we couldn't, because we started talking about children as part of this conversation. It is such a personal conversation, which is why we shouldn't rush through it and we need to invite our communities into it.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Questions and comments?

Mr. John Fraser: It's a pleasure to respond to the member from Lennox—

Mr. Randy Hillier: Lanark.

Mr. John Fraser: —Lanark—Frontenac—Lennox and Addington.

I'll tell a story I told yesterday. My mom is a nurse. She's 84—sorry, Mom. She's not practising anymore; that's why I said her age—and she's very devout. I said to her, "Mom, do you think you could do this?" She thought and she said, "Well, I don't think I could assist because I believe God gives and takes life away." In the next breath, she says, "But there are extreme circumstances."

So what she was really saying to me is, "You've asked me a question to which I have no proximity. It's not there in front of me." Not many of us have that proximity, and as a group, as a society, this is new. We don't have that proximity.

There are really difficult questions. The question that the member raises around rights of conscience: I think about that every day. It's squaring the rights that exist for conscientious objection and for patients' access and the moral duty that exists for a practitioner to serve that person and to care for that person with the skills they have.

I can really appreciate the dilemma that people find themselves in. The work that's being done in that regard around the clinician referral service and the care coordination service is speaking to that, because that's what some those practitioners talked to us about.

It is really important that we get this right and that we don't take hardened positions on either side. As we can

see from this debate, we all have to come through this together as a society. It's not an easy thing.

I appreciate the tone of this debate. I appreciate the member's remarks. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Questions and comments?

Mr. Rick Nicholls: Again, it's a privilege to stand and have the opportunity to talk about Bill 84. With Bill 84, one of the things I don't want to see is health care professionals forced to compromise their conscience. I think that's a very important element of this bill which may be lacking at this point, but I certainly would like to see it put into the bill, perhaps when it passes second reading and goes into committee. Health care workers shouldn't be forced to perform, assist or even have to refer for MAID against their will and shouldn't be discriminated against for taking this particular stand.

We've heard people in this assembly already debate and discuss the aspects of this particular bill. It's a tough one because, again, when we look at it, there are a lot of reasons why people shouldn't be forced—for example, ethics, moral convictions, their conscience. These are all elements.

I think back to—actually it was, oh, golly, March 1979. That's when I first learned that my mother was gravely ill with cancer. She passed away in November of that year. I still recall being at that hospital. I went through all the emotions, but she was—what the medical professionals did was they worked very diligently to keep her comfortable, so she was loaded with morphine to kind of appease the pain. Eventually, she did pass. I was relieved, and a lot of the people were. But I could not give consent. I wouldn't give consent. I couldn't give consent, from a moral perspective, to say, "Listen, we would like to see my mother die now." So there are a lot of issues here that need to still be addressed, I believe.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Questions and comments?

M^{me} France Gélinas: It was very interesting to listen to the member from Lanark—Frontenac—Lennox and Addington.

I just want to take this opportunity to show what should have been done. Here we are, 107 MPPs, and I would say we represent pretty much the entire province and we behave pretty much like the rest of the people of Ontario. Some of us are on the side that thinks that medical assistance in dying should happen and some of us are on the side where they would never consider this, very much like the rest of our society.

The Legislative Assembly gives us a safe place to have this discussion, and we rise to the challenge. We have a very civilized discussion, although it is obvious that not all of us agree. We're not all in the same place, but we all left room to show that we could find middle ground, we could find a way to live with medical assistance in dying while respecting everybody's views.

This is what my hour lead was all about: If you give people a safe place to have those conversations, Ontarians will rise to the challenge, and we will stop

having those polarized discussions on social media and start to show where the values of Ontario take us given that the law has changed. While we respect that, on the spectrum, we can be all over the place, there's room for all of us to find some common ground. We can all do this in a civilized way.

How I wish that this opportunity that was given to us had been given to the people of Ontario. We would all be better off.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): The member from Lanark-Frontenac-Lennox and Addington has two minutes to reply.

Mr. Randy Hillier: I'd like to recognize and thank the members from Windsor West, Ottawa South, Chatham-Kent-Essex and Nickel Belt. It would be a blessing one day if I could have a riding name with just two words, I guess, as well—easier to remember.

Listen, I want to thank those members for their comments, and I want to thank all members of the House for listening and being involved in the debate.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Thank you.

Second reading debate deemed adjourned.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Pursuant to standing order 38, the question that this House do now adjourn is deemed to have been made.

ADJOURNMENT DEBATE

ENERGY POLICIES

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): The member from Prince Edward-Hastings has given notice of his dissatisfaction with the answer to a question given today by the Minister of Energy. The member has up to five minutes to debate the matter, and the parliamentary assistant or the minister may reply for up to five minutes.

Mr. Todd Smith: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I apologize for keeping you late this evening, but I wanted to get an answer from the minister—I am going to get an answer of some kind from the parliamentary assistant—here this evening on the question that I asked this morning on the Windstream lawsuit.

So let's talk about Windstream. It's a fascinating case study, because we have documents about it. These are publicly available on the federal government website. You can read the whole NAFTA case, if you're so inclined.

I want to work backwards because I want to start with what we know today, which is that the NAFTA court ruled against the government, and Windstream is seeking to recover the \$28 million that it was initially awarded. As we know, the federal government is on the hook for all NAFTA awards, so the first issue that the minister failed to address this morning is who's paying. We don't have a clear answer, and the damage award is accruing interest every day, so we need this thing settled.

However—and this is not an unimportant point—the Windstream contract remains in force. This project could

still be built at a cost of \$5.2 billion to the ratepayer. This is a monster FIT contract. This is power at a cost of 19 cents per kilowatt hour. If this thing ever goes on the grid, the minister doesn't own a chainsaw large enough to cut through the global adjustment fee to get it down to size. But the government will also point out that over the break it extended the offshore wind moratorium, so this thing can't go on the grid because of the moratorium, but it remains in force. We have a minister who is in need of an escape hatch on this project.

If I could paraphrase Cool Hand Luke for a minute, Speaker, what we've got here is a failure to generate, because one of two things must be true: Either there is no cost-free way out of this contract and the government is only trying to defer dealing with the bigger issue of building the project until a more politically convenient time, or there is a cost-free way out of this contract. If the latter is true, the question that necessarily follows is, how many other contracts could the government have gotten out of at no cost to the ratepayer? If a mechanism does exist and the government uses it for Windstream, where else could it have been used?

Just as one example, we know from the Windstream NAFTA filing that the old Ontario Power Authority refused to extend the commercial operation date for the project on August 10, 2010. Political staff at energy were contacted by Windstream's lobbyists around that time and assured the Windstream representative that the power authority would "be dealt with." On August 12, the OPA confirmed it would be revising the contract with the requested change in the milestone commercial operation date to May 4, 2015. A week later, Windstream signed their FIT contract.

I and other members have had commercial operation dates extended by the government, which have dragged project approval into the better part of a decade. If these—and there are potential other examples—clauses are used to cancel this project, the question must follow: Why is Windstream special once again?

Speaker, that reference doesn't come from nowhere. In the NAFTA document, senior Liberals at energy stated, on January 13, 2011, that Windstream "be kept whole and open to the possibility of an extension." We've come too far, with too much evidence, to give the minister much credit on this file. Respectfully, he has too much to answer for, and hopefully we'll start to get some answers on the Windstream case.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): The parliamentary assistant has up to five minutes.

Mr. Bob Delaney: Speaker, the member pointed out that in December 2016, the NAFTA tribunal reached a decision. That decision has been shared publicly, as well as with Windstream. That means that any payment to be made must be made through the federal government.

With regard to the status of Windstream's contract, this is indeed a contract between Windstream and the Independent Electricity System Operator. It would be completely inappropriate for the government or the province to comment on a contract, and as such it would be inappropriate for the province to deal with Wind-

stream or any other entity, either in question period, through the media or through Hansard. The most appropriate forum for the two counterparties—those being the Independent Electricity System Operator and Windstream—is to operate within the parameters of their contract.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): There being no further matters to debate, I deem the motion to adjourn to be carried.

This House stands adjourned until 9 o'clock tomorrow morning.

The House adjourned at 1804.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO
ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Lieutenant Governor / Lieutenant-gouverneure: Hon. / L'hon. Elizabeth Dowdeswell, OC, OOnt.

Speaker / Président: Hon. / L'hon. Dave Levac

Clerk / Greffier: Todd Decker

Deputy Clerk / Le Sous-Greffier: Trevor Day

Clerks-at-the-Table / Greffiers parlementaires: Tonia Grannum, William Short

Sergeant-at-Arms / Sergente d'armes: Jacquelyn Gordon

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Albanese, Hon. / L'hon. Laura (LIB)	York South-Weston / York-Sud-Weston	Minister of Citizenship and Immigration / Ministre des Affaires civiques et de l'Immigration
Anderson, Granville (LIB)	Durham	
Armstrong, Teresa J. (NDP)	London-Fanshawe	
Arnott, Ted (PC)	Wellington-Halton Hills	First Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Premier vice-président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée
Bailey, Robert (PC)	Sarnia-Lambton	
Baker, Yvan (LIB)	Etobicoke Centre / Etobicoke-Centre	
Ballard, Hon. / L'hon. Chris (LIB)	Newmarket-Aurora	Minister of Housing / Ministre du Logement Minister Responsible for the Poverty Reduction Strategy / Ministre responsable de la Stratégie de réduction de la pauvreté
Barrett, Toby (PC)	Haldimand-Norfolk	
Berardinetti, Lorenzo (LIB)	Scarborough Southwest / Scarborough-Sud-Ouest	
Bisson, Gilles (NDP)	Timmins-James Bay / Timmins-Baie James	
Bradley, James J. (LIB)	St. Catharines	Deputy Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint du gouvernement
Brown, Patrick (PC)	Simcoe North / Simcoe-Nord	Leader, Official Opposition / Chef de l'opposition officielle Leader, Progressive Conservative Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti progressiste-conservateur de l'Ontario
Campbell, Sarah (NDP)	Kenora-Rainy River	
Chan, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)	Markham-Unionville	Minister of International Trade / Ministre du Commerce International
Chiarelli, Hon. / L'hon. Bob (LIB)	Ottawa West-Nepean / Ottawa-Ouest-Nepean	Minister of Infrastructure / Ministre de l'Infrastructure
Cho, Raymond Sung Joon (PC)	Scarborough-Rouge River	
Clark, Steve (PC)	Leeds-Grenville	Deputy Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint de l'opposition officielle Deputy Leader, Official Opposition / Chef adjoint de l'opposition officielle
Coe, Lorne (PC)	Whitby-Oshawa	
Colle, Mike (LIB)	Eglinton-Lawrence	
Coteau, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)	Don Valley East / Don Valley-Est	Minister of Children and Youth Services / Ministre des Services à l'enfance et à la jeunesse Minister Responsible for Anti-Racism / Ministre délégué à l'Action contre le racisme
Crack, Grant (LIB)	Glengarry-Prescott-Russell	
Damerla, Hon. / L'hon. Dipika (LIB)	Mississauga East-Cooksville / Mississauga-Est-Cooksville	Minister of Seniors Affairs / Ministre des Affaires des personnes âgées
Del Duca, Hon. / L'hon. Steven (LIB)	Vaughan	Minister of Transportation / Ministre des Transports
Delaney, Bob (LIB)	Mississauga-Streetsville	
Des Rosiers, Nathalie (LIB)	Ottawa-Vanier	
Dhillon, Vic (LIB)	Brampton West / Brampton-Ouest	
Dickson, Joe (LIB)	Ajax-Pickering	
DiNovo, Cheri (NDP)	Parkdale-High Park	
Dong, Han (LIB)	Trinity-Spadina	
Duguid, Hon. / L'hon. Brad (LIB)	Scarborough Centre / Scarborough-Centre	Minister of Economic Development and Growth / Ministre du Développement économique et de la Croissance
Fedeli, Victor (PC)	Nipissing	
Fife, Catherine (NDP)	Kitchener-Waterloo	
Flynn, Hon. / L'hon. Kevin Daniel (LIB)	Oakville	Minister of Labour / Ministre du Travail
Forster, Cindy (NDP)	Welland	

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Fraser, John (LIB)	Ottawa South / Ottawa-Sud	
French, Jennifer K. (NDP)	Oshawa	
Gates, Wayne (NDP)	Niagara Falls	
Gélinas, France (NDP)	Nickel Belt	
Gravelle, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)	Thunder Bay-Superior North / Thunder Bay-Superior-Nord	Minister of Northern Development and Mines / Ministre du Développement du Nord et des Mines
Gretzky, Lisa (NDP)	Windsor West / Windsor-Ouest	
Hardeman, Ernie (PC)	Oxford	
Harris, Michael (PC)	Kitchener-Conestoga	
Hatfield, Percy (NDP)	Windsor-Tecumseh	
Hillier, Randy (PC)	Lanark-Frontenac-Lennox and Addington	
Hoggarth, Ann (LIB)	Barrie	
Horwath, Andrea (NDP)	Hamilton Centre / Hamilton-Centre	Leader, Recognized Party / Chef de parti reconnu Leader, New Democratic Party of Ontario / Chef du Nouveau parti démocratique de l'Ontario
Hoskins, Hon. / L'hon. Eric (LIB)	St. Paul's	Minister of Health and Long-Term Care / Ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée
Hunter, Hon. / L'hon. Mitzie (LIB)	Scarborough-Guildwood	Minister of Education / Ministre de l'Éducation
Jaczek, Hon. / L'hon. Helena (LIB)	Oak Ridges-Markham	Minister of Community and Social Services / Ministre des Services sociaux et communautaires
Jones, Sylvia (PC)	Dufferin-Caledon	Deputy Leader, Official Opposition / Chef adjointe de l'opposition officielle
Kiwala, Sophie (LIB)	Kingston and the Islands / Kingston et les îles	
Kwinter, Monte (LIB)	York Centre / York-Centre	
Lalonde, Hon. / L'hon. Marie-France (LIB)	Ottawa-Orléans	Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services / Ministre de la Sécurité communautaire et des Services correctionnels Minister Responsible for Francophone Affairs / Ministre déléguée aux Affaires francophones
Leal, Hon. / L'hon. Jeff (LIB)	Peterborough	Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs / Ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales Minister Responsible for Small Business / Ministre responsable des Petites Entreprises
Levac, Hon. / L'hon. Dave (LIB)	Brant	Speaker / Président de l'Assemblée législative
MacCharles, Hon. / L'hon. Tracy (LIB)	Pickering-Scarborough East / Pickering-Scarborough-Est	Minister of Government and Consumer Services / Ministre des Services gouvernementaux et des Services aux consommateurs Minister Responsible for Accessibility / Ministre responsable de l'Accessibilité
MacLaren, Jack (PC)	Carleton-Mississippi Mills	
MacLeod, Lisa (PC)	Nepean-Carleton	
Malhi, Harinder (LIB)	Brampton-Springdale	
Mangat, Amrit (LIB)	Mississauga-Brampton South / Mississauga-Brampton-Sud	
Mantha, Michael (NDP)	Algoma-Manitoulin	
Martins, Cristina (LIB)	Davenport	
Martow, Gila (PC)	Thornhill	
Matthews, Hon. / L'hon. Deborah (LIB)	London North Centre / London-Centre-Nord	Chair of Cabinet / Présidente du Conseil des ministres Deputy Premier / Vice-première ministre
Mauro, Hon. / L'hon. Bill (LIB)	Thunder Bay-Atikokan	Minister of Advanced Education and Skills Development / Ministre de l'Enseignement supérieur et de la Formation professionnelle
McDonell, Jim (PC)	Stormont-Dundas-South Glengarry	Minister Responsible for Digital Government / Ministre responsable de l'Action pour un gouvernement numérique
McGarry, Hon. / L'hon. Kathryn (LIB)	Cambridge	Minister of Municipal Affairs / Ministre des Affaires municipales
McMahon, Hon. / L'hon. Eleanor (LIB)	Burlington	Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry / Ministre des Richesses naturelles et des Forêts
McMeekin, Ted (LIB)	Ancaster-Dundas-Flamborough-Westdale	Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport / Ministre du Tourisme, de la Culture et du Sport
McNaughton, Monte (PC)	Lambton-Kent-Middlesex	
Milczyn, Peter Z. (LIB)	Etobicoke-Lakeshore	

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Miller, Norm (PC)	Parry Sound–Muskoka	
Miller, Paul (NDP)	Hamilton East–Stoney Creek / Hamilton-Est–Stoney Creek	Third Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Troisième vice-président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Moridi, Hon. / L'hon. Reza (LIB)	Richmond Hill	Minister of Research, Innovation and Science / Ministre de la Recherche, de l'Innovation et des Sciences
Munro, Julia (PC)	York–Simcoe	
Murray, Hon. / L'hon. Glen R. (LIB)	Toronto Centre / Toronto-Centre	Minister of the Environment and Climate Change / Ministre de l'Environnement et de l'Action en matière de changement climatique
Naidoo-Harris, Hon. / L'hon. Indira (LIB)	Halton	Minister of the Status of Women / Ministre de la condition féminine Minister Responsible for Early Years and Child Care / Ministre responsable de la Petite enfance et de la Garde d'enfants
Naqvi, Hon. / L'hon. Yasir (LIB)	Ottawa Centre / Ottawa-Centre	Attorney General / Procureur général Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire du gouvernement
Natyshak, Taras (NDP)	Essex	
Nicholls, Rick (PC)	Chatham-Kent–Essex	Second Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Deuxième vice-président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Oosterhoff, Sam (PC)	Niagara West–Glanbrook / Niagara- Ouest–Glanbrook	
Pettapiece, Randy (PC)	Perth–Wellington	
Potts, Arthur (LIB)	Beaches–East York	
Qaadri, Shafiq (LIB)	Etobicoke North / Etobicoke-Nord	
Rinaldi, Lou (LIB)	Northumberland–Quinte West	
Sandals, Hon. / L'hon. Liz (LIB)	Guelph	President of the Treasury Board / Présidente du Conseil du Trésor
Sattler, Peggy (NDP)	London West / London-Ouest	
Scott, Laurie (PC)	Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock	
Sergio, Mario (LIB)	York West / York-Ouest	
Singh, Jagmeet (NDP)	Bramalea–Gore–Malton	
Smith, Todd (PC)	Prince Edward–Hastings	
Sousa, Hon. / L'hon. Charles (LIB)	Mississauga South / Mississauga-Sud	Deputy Leader, Recognized Party / Chef adjoint de parti reconnu
Tabuns, Peter (NDP)	Toronto–Danforth	Minister of Finance / Ministre des Finances
Takhar, Harinder S. (LIB)	Mississauga–Erindale	
Taylor, Monique (NDP)	Hamilton Mountain	
Thibeault, Hon. / L'hon. Glenn (LIB)	Sudbury	Minister of Energy / Ministre de l'Énergie
Thompson, Lisa M. (PC)	Huron–Bruce	
Vanthof, John (NDP)	Timiskaming–Cochrane	
Vernile, Daiene (LIB)	Kitchener Centre / Kitchener-Centre	
Walker, Bill (PC)	Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound	
Wilson, Jim (PC)	Simcoe–Grey	Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire de l'opposition officielle
Wong, Soo (LIB)	Scarborough–Agincourt	Deputy Speaker / Vice-présidente
Wynne, Hon. / L'hon. Kathleen O. (LIB)	Don Valley West / Don Valley-Ouest	Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs / Ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales Premier / Première ministre Leader, Liberal Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti libéral de l'Ontario
Yakabuski, John (PC)	Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke	
Yurek, Jeff (PC)	Elgin–Middlesex–London	
Zimmer, Hon. / L'hon. David (LIB)	Willowdale	Minister of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation / Ministre des Relations avec les Autochtones et de la Réconciliation
Vacant	Sault Ste. Marie	

**STANDING COMMITTEES OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
COMITÉS PERMANENTS DE L'ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE**

Standing Committee on Estimates / Comité permanent des budgets des dépenses

Chair / Présidente: Cheri DiNovo
Bob Delaney, Cheri DiNovo
Joe Dickson, Michael Harris
Sophie Kiwala, Michael Mantha
Peter Z. Milczyn, Arthur Potts
Todd Smith
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Eric Rennie

Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs / Comité permanent des finances et des affaires économiques

Chair / Président: Peter Z. Milczyn
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Ann Hoggarth
Yvan Baker, Toby Barrett
Han Dong, Victor Fedeli
Catherine Fife, Ann Hoggarth
Harinder Malhi, Cristina Martins
Peter Z. Milczyn
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Eric Rennie

Standing Committee on General Government / Comité permanent des affaires gouvernementales

Chair / Président: Grant Crack
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Mike Colle
Granville Anderson, Yvan Baker
Mike Colle, Mike Colle
Grant Crack, Nathalie Des Rosiers
Lisa Gretzky, Ann Hoggarth
Julia Munro, Lisa M. Thompson
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Sylwia Przezdziecki

Standing Committee on Government Agencies / Comité permanent des organismes gouvernementaux

Chair / Présidente: Cristina Martins
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Daiene Vernile
Granville Anderson, James J. Bradley
Wayne Gates, Amrit Mangat
Cristina Martins, Sam Oosterhoff
Randy Pettapiece, Shafiq Qaadri
Daiene Vernile
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Sylwia Przezdziecki

Standing Committee on Justice Policy / Comité permanent de la justice

Chair / Président: Shafiq Qaadri
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Lorenzo Berardinetti
Lorenzo Berardinetti, Mike Colle
Bob Delaney, Nathalie Des Rosiers
Michael Mantha, Jim McDonell
Shafiq Qaadri, Daiene Vernile
Bill Walker
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Christopher Tyrell

Standing Committee on the Legislative Assembly / Comité permanent de l'Assemblée législative

Chair / Président: Monte McNaughton
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Laurie Scott
Robert Bailey, James J. Bradley
Joe Dickson, Sophie Kiwala
Harinder Malhi, Michael Mantha
Monte McNaughton, Laurie Scott
Soo Wong
Committee Clerk / Greffier: William Short

Standing Committee on Public Accounts / Comité permanent des comptes publics

Chair / Président: Ernie Hardeman
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Lisa MacLeod
Vic Dhillon, Han Dong
John Fraser, Ernie Hardeman
Percy Hatfield, Randy Hillier
Monte Kwinter, Lisa MacLeod
Arthur Potts
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Valerie Quioc Lim

Standing Committee on Regulations and Private Bills / Comité permanent des règlements et des projets de loi d'intérêt privé

Chair / Président: Ted McMeekin
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Lou Rinaldi
Lorenzo Berardinetti, Grant Crack
Jennifer K. French, Jack MacLaren
Ted McMeekin, Lou Rinaldi
Mario Sergio, Soo Wong
Jeff Yurek
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Christopher Tyrell

Standing Committee on Social Policy / Comité permanent de la politique sociale

Chair / Président: Peter Tabuns
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Jagmeet Singh
Lorne Coe, Vic Dhillon
John Fraser, Amrit Mangat
Gila Martow, Ted McMeekin
Lou Rinaldi, Jagmeet Singh
Peter Tabuns
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Katch Koch